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FIVE SINS OF AN ARCHITECT

FIVE SINS OF AN ARCHITECT

WITH AN APOLOGY

BY

SOLOMON GARGOYLE



MAN IS INDEED MARKED FOR FAILURE IN HIS EFFORTS TO DO RIGHT. BUT WHERE THE BEST CONSISTENTLY MIS-CARRY, HOW TENFOLD REMARKABLE THAT ALL SHOULD CONTINUE TO STRIVE: AND SURELY WE SHOULD FEEL IT BOTH TOUCHING AND INSPIRING, THAT IN A FIELD FROM WHICH SUCCESS IS BANISHED, THE LABORS OF OUR RACE SHOULD NOT BE STAYED.

R. L. Stevenson: Pulvis et Umbra

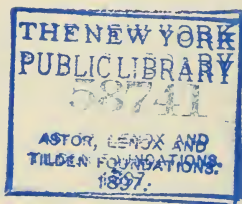


Philadelphia

Arnold and Company

NEW YORK

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TO ONE WHO HAS WATCHED THE PEN WORK
OF MOST OF THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK
AND WHO KNOWS NEITHER SIN
NOR A DEVIL, TO MY DOG

HOMO

THESE ESSAYS ARE DEDICATED

In this lower sphere, it is not murder and sudden death, and other such volcanic aberrations, that call for condonation; but those offenses against that code of daily intercourse which some faulty observer of human life has characterized as 'the minor morals.'

LE GALLIENNE: PROSE FANCIES

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THE DIALOGUE AT THE CLUB

I

Charity

THE MISCHANCE OF GOOD-WILL



THE quality we call good-will in a human being is well thought of the world over. It causes its possessor to be sought after by every creature who imagines that some of its essence can be extracted to further his own individual plans ; and the gauge of its quality is regulated by the steadiness of the supply. To have it constantly on tap is one of the public secrets of the politician, so that no man who aspires to office or aims for promotion can safely count on support unless he shows marked favors to Tom, Dick, Harry & Co. Let him once betray the least sparkle of impatience or try to mount the hill on his own stilts, and straightway the road is left solitary, with all its bowlders and wind-drift to encounter alone.

To an architect, in a special degree, who creates through the labor of others, this quality in human nature is often burdensome

and always full of danger. If he be of the generous, full-hearted type, every refusal is a source of soreness ; for the granting is not often attended with any particular evil, although it is father to many which come after it. Young Speedwell is given a half-holiday ; a fortnight later the wish is expressed for a whole day, and if also given, the desires increase in a most alarming fashion ; benefits conferred have no regular breeding season. There is but one way to safety for you at this stage, yet, no matter how gracious the previous record has been, a flat refusal brings forward its smothered avalanche of wrath.

When we as individuals give that which belongs to us, something in which no other being holds interest, the consequences likewise become a personal matter. But when compliance with another man's wishes is at the expense of a third, the client's, or bears strongly on his interest, the whole affair is likely to tangle our judgment, although at first blush it would seem easier to protect the patron's interests than one's own. Invested power over others, like that of an architect's, requires strong discipline to hold within rigid

lines, which latter statement brings forward a memory.

It was a clear, frosty morning when old Godkin came into Ralston's office with his head full of crochets and a new house. The two of us who were in the architect's private study at work at side-tables and lost behind a screen, waited with simmering curiosity to see how our chief would take him. Godkin, talked of over town as an old fool, was yet so plenteously endowed with the currency of the States as to make him a very desirable client. To hear him tell his wants was to be our good luck for that day. He was a man small in stature, his hair well touched with the hint of years and marked above all other features by his very bright blue eyes. That he knew something of Ralston before this meeting was to be seen in the manner of his speech.

"Good morning, Ralston. How is this room heated? It's hot enough in here to dry the tissue of your muscles," and with these words he fell to looking at the radiator as if an answer was to come from it.

"It's direct radiation—hot water ; and the air is changed once in fifteen minutes," Rals-

ton tersely replied, with no effort to rise from his chair.

"I shall not have it in my house," said Godkin, calmly. He seated himself, and then, "I want to finish it by autumn and have a wood fire made in each room to dry the plaster."

"You are building a house?" said the chief, leisurely; "how far has it gone?"

"Gone! It is not commenced, and I have come to you to make the drawings!"

"Oh," and Ralston waited in a silence that seemed to ignore his visitor's importance.

Both men were independent beyond measure, one secure in his wealth, the other in his indifference to it; and with Ralston there was an additional element in his dislike for all creatures of great wealth, which often ran him into moods dangerous to his professional welfare.

For some minutes Godkin seemed puzzled by the architect's unresponsive air; yet a light of intelligence suddenly found place in his eyes, and fitting his glasses to his nose he gazed at Ralston while the latter still held to his listlessness and tapped the table with a paper-knife.

"I have heard much of your ability, Mr.

Ralston," said Godkin, pompously, "and my impression of the last five minutes has strengthened into liking. I like to deal with men who are not damned sycophants. I want an architect who will not only draw the plan of my house, but who will look after its execution so carefully as to shield me from the villany of builders and the tricks of tradesmen. You have the outer mould of such an one, and your manners seem to bear you out." Having thus delivered himself, the speaker stopped and looked for some response.

With all his peculiarities, Ralston was not an ungenial man. This speech, touched with flattery, must have galled him; but it wore so much of the garb of appreciation that he fled from his barriers and broke into an acknowledgment.

Amicable relations being established, we heard for an hour and more a discussion as to the house. So elaborate and lavish were the client's ideas that our very heads seemed to expand as the project was discussed.

Through all the changes of the year,—the plans finally developed,—we watched the growth of the new house and gloried in its per-

fections. With Ralston it seemed to become a monomania, and his work was unceasing. No branch of labor in connection with the building was slighted or cheapened ; every nail went to its home with the ring of honesty, and the very timbers were smooth-planed and finished. In the midst of it all stood Godkin, silently acquiescent, watchful we felt, but satisfied. It is safe to say that he saw every spot that was to be covered or concealed, and that a large share of his pleasure went into self-assurance. His constant brief query, when Ralston gave him a choice, was, "Is it the best?"—and after that there were no more words.

But one day the two of us who were nearest to Ralston in the intimacy of the work, and who had witnessed the initial scene as to the house, became possessed of a nightmare. On three occasions we had noted Godkin entering the doors of tradesmen, who, while they had no contracts to fill in his house, were rivals of those firms who had, and many an hour did we discuss the mystery. We could understand that the odd client of our office might have other building interests than his new dwelling, but why should he consort so steadily with these

aliens when he seemed well pleased with the manufacturers already in his employ? No answer came to hand, and we tried to dismiss the subject, feeling like foolish busy-bodies. To mention it to our chief we knew would bring a sharp snub, so we took it in silence.

Meanwhile, everything was moving to a fair conclusion, and the rare bits of hardwood in the house were already employing the joiners. Day after day saw each apartment grow more charming and bear promise of the end. The tide of anxious care in the office gradually lessened until soon every vestige of a drawing was finished and stacked away. Ralston's good humor flowered; he beamed on every one, and forgot his many personal eccentricities. Sub-contractors were praised and promised fame, and one morning we caught our chief giving a five-dollar bill to the watchman who labored sedulously to keep the dust off the new work.

On all this scene of placid satisfaction, tumultuous alone in inward joy, behold the devil appear. One morning Cheston, the cabinet-maker, with impressive secretiveness, requested audience of the chief. The chorus, as usual, were behind their screen, nor did Ralston

at any time bid them begone, for his business had no secrets from those he trusted. If one of the auditors is now playing false it can count nothing to his discredit, for Ralston has long since gone before the court of award, and is busy, the writer trusts, with the colonnades of the New Jerusalem.

"Well, Cheston, we are soon to hear, 'well done, thou good and faithful servant,' eh?" said Ralston, merrily.

"I hope so, sir," replied the other, and betrayed a cloud by his cautious voice.

"Anything the matter?" queried Ralston, quick to catch the wrong inflection.

"Nothing to speak of, sir," answered the cabinet-maker, and then indulged in a bit of a squirm. "That maple for the dining-room floor has come; it's the best in the market, I say."

"I haven't seen it," said Ralston, "but I will look at it to-day."

"It's a bit uneven," Cheston went on, shrinkingly, "but you can't do better than the best."

"But I can't have uneven stuff," Ralston cried, sharply, "and you know what your specification says."

"Before God, Mr. Ralston," broke out the other, coming to his climax with a shrill cry, "I have done the best I could. I have looked up every lumber yard of any kind within five hundred miles, all for that bit of maple, and the cost of getting it has eaten up the best part of my profit on the work. I don't think anyone will ever know the difference; besides, the painter can help it with his varnish."

At this, Ralston, scarcely giving the man the bound of his speech, broke sharply into anger, and swore the stuff must be right to a T. He was filled with rage at these excuses, and dropped into a chair exhausted.

"But what *can* I do?" cried Cheston, and the man seemed to be honest in his agony. "I lied to you a minute ago, when I said that the best part of my profit was gone. It's all gone, and I'm five thousand dollars behind."

At this announcement Ralston stared dizzily at the man, and seeing his helplessness and despair, drew a long breath. After all of their long months of effort and care it seemed but a puny fault that this poor man should pay so dearly because three or four boards betrayed a grain which the expert woodman alone could

detect. Some consideration should surely exist, and everything was now so bright and brilliant that they could afford to forget this little matter.

The pause lasted long ; Ralston was gazing out of the window, and he drew a cigar from his pocket, and then another, with the movements of an automaton.

“Well, Cheston,” he said at last, and handed the man one of the cigars, “you have done honest work and tried for the best. If that stuff is not too bad—I’ll go and look at it at once—we’ll put it in and say no more, but you must see to any extra labor the painter spends on it.”

An exuberant burst of thanks broke from Cheston, and we heard the echo of his returning cheerfulness as he spoke to the clerks in the other office on his way out.

The balance of ill-luck seems to constantly run in gross quantities, and the week was not spent before several more such petitions were made to Ralston, first by one contractor and then by another. So flushed with satisfaction had he become that several of these appeals received sanction, even coupled with a word of praise. Having entered entirely

into the building's existence, it was often the case that he spoke of Godkin's house in the same key he would have mentioned his own, and the control of its details became a strictly personal affair with him. Godkin unconsciously assisted this fallacious feeling, and in moments of office talk had commenced to describe, in his own way, some future buildings which *his* architect was to design, so that the plot of a half-million-dollar office building already lay on the chief's desk.

It is the natural growth of a man's claim to the possession of clients in architecture that he shall attain to the many by the compliments of a few, and to have an employer treading the same ways of life as Godkin, talking in the club and on the street, was a private advertising boom, with which all the agencies in the world would fail in competition. It bespoke success in more than a few ways, and was full of the excitement of popularity. The intoxication seized upon Ralston, and after a long period of professional battle he seemed at last to be entering his conquered city with drums a-beat and colors flying fair to the breeze. The little tuft of grey in his hair had grown larger and

showed that victory was not born of ease. We were all proud of him in the office, and the writer experienced strong regret when the tide of affairs took him to another city to commence his own independent practice. For that which remains to be written of Ralston the other member of the chorus furnished the facts, and he told them with a sob in his voice.

It turned out that Godkin had played the constant spy on Ralston's work for him. Largely suspicious by nature, and accustomed through his whole life to watch employees with hawk-like attention, he drew no lines of difference in his secret personal attitude towards the architect. But for once he was at a disadvantage; he knew nothing of architectural work, and to analyze the artistic side of Ralston's results was an impossibility to him. On the other hand, he could obtain facts as to qualities and kinds of materials, and it was in this amiable detective work that we had noted him engaged when we discovered his visits to the rival dealers in building materials. Facts were easily collected, and by much pumping of these wayside oracles a standard of comparison and judgment became his property,

which he proceeded to put into active use. Every variation which Ralston had impulsively allowed the contractors to make, was spied out with the diligence of an accountant, but without a word of comment until the building was finished. Then, one late afternoon, when Ralston was busy brooding over the sketch-plan of the office building, enter Godkin with a cold statement of his observations and a revoke on all future projects. As Ralston started to defend his action, with a sting of indignation in his voice, the one auditor hastily quitted the room, smarting in sympathy with the pain which he knew must be all-aflame in his chief's heart. What was further said no man but Godkin, who still lives, could tell, but he left the office within the hour and was seen there no more.

Chasms must have yawned before Ralston as he sat and recalled that interview. For days he remained in his office, sunk in bewilderment, and the spirit of energy that had long appeared to control his life, went out like a candle-flame at the end of the tallow. Complaints of inattention and errors found their way daily to the office, being met usually with a stolid indiffer-

ence and savageness. Commissions became less in number, and the silence of an understanding seemed to go abroad that something was crooked about Ralston's career. He appeared indifferent to it all, and with the passing of a year his work had dwindled to what it was in his earlier days, Fortune's tide making no return again in his lifetime.



All extremes are illiberal and unjust, nor is this incident in a professional life a common one. Few men who employ architects unite the craftiness and unforgiving disposition of a Godkin, and the majority in the world do not call for perfection. In their own occupations they find from day to day that they sin much themselves, and that their own hearts cry quits with the failings of others ; life is not anchored on granite, but is a free raft, whose course every current of emotion aims to change. Yet Godkin was not a Shylock ; the demands of his bond were just and not unreasonable. Every man expects good meat from his butcher and well-baked bread from his baker. If the one is tainted and the other is sodden, straightway the providers must appear for an account. Proven

that the money of the customer is from the mint of the country, no counterfeit presentment of good wares from the dealer can be acceptable. The fair exchange of commerce is broken down and somewhere or other the discredit must appear, nor can any plea but fleeing health or physical weakness stand the test of the scales of justice. It may be a small affair in the infinite mazes of life, whether locks have four tumblers or six tumblers, or whether the proportions of a paint are measured pound for pound ; but if a man has bargained for the six tumblers, or for four parts to two in his paint, and is ready on his side with the number of pieces of silver he has promised to pay, he should receive his strict measure, and the judge of the barter must see that he gets it. Both parties to the bargain must stand to their places, so that if the six-tumbler locks can only be obtained in Muskegon, the dealer has had ample time to learn it in his business experience, nor should ships sailing the circuit of the globe to obtain them throw dismay on his affairs. The buyer is held to him in bonds to pay what he has promised, so that, on his part, if his silver be low, he must go sell,

borrow or earn the money to meet his side of the barter.

Modern life has devised all sorts of safeguards to sustain this fair exchange. State Boards of Analysis peer into the food products which men put upon the market, and Weighers and Measurers have long stalked into warehouses, endowed with the majesty of the law. On all hands such investigation is welcomed by honest men, for it not only builds up the structure of security in their dealings with their fellows, but provides handy methods to use in their advertising schemes; a twin birth of applied virtue and commerce. Indeed, the machinery goes farther than this, for it holds the agents of the law to a strict account of their own judgments, surrounding them with penalties and forfeits to prop their individual virtue. And having established this system of cogs, it is but natural that in the walks of life to which we yield a higher place, and in which license is given in the name of men's honor, we there look for the exact results which mercantile business attains by its rigid machinery. The judge must be beyond suspicion of bribe, the lawyer must know no cause but his employer's, the

physician must hold his time and strength subject to the wavering lamp of life, and all these irrespective of their reward.

Apart from the law of obligation which is imposed by the relation between the architect and his client, there is strong question as to whether efforts to be considerate towards workmen are not always opening the door for imposition. Give a boy permission to pick apples from your trees and to-morrow there will be ten boys,—twenty boys, all modestly asking the same privilege. If you do not grant it they will most likely try to steal the fruit, since your display of kindness has proven you to be a person of amiable turn of mind, and therefore not likely to be dangerous to offenders. In a crowd there will always be those who, if you but exhibit a modest disposition not to push, will quickly glide ahead of you and soon leave you at the end of the line unless you square your shoulders against their movements. Respect from the mass of the world is most often gained by rude aggression. If our advances towards a more courteous behavior were differently received there would be better ground for keeping them up, but the only

method to protect ourselves, or those whose interests we represent, it seems, must rely on a stiff holding to our requirements. "You should be very loth to encourage expectations in a suitor, which you have not then the power of fulfilling, or of putting in a course of fulfillment ;—for Hope, an architect above rules, can build in reverse, a pyramid upon a point. From a very little origin there often arises a wildness of expectation which quite astounds you. Like the Fisherman in the Arabian Nights, when you see 'a genie twice as high as the greatest of giants,' you may well wonder how he could have come out of so small a vessel ; but in your case, there will be no chance of persuading the monster to ensconce himself again, for the purpose of convincing you that such a feat is not impossible."

Men are deceived daily, misled into believing that if they yield a point it will be met by a compromise in their favor on some other point. But results show that the matter is soon forgotten, and if an attempt is made to gain a requital, it is regarded with astonished surprise. The architect, in his position at the head of so many workers, is regarded as the coiner of a

mint of favors, each one small in itself, but with a gross aggregate that well pays the recipients. His place is one of such independent government, free from the dominion of superiors, since his employer can know but little of the minor details of the work under his care, that the workman places much reliance on his willingness to be lax in severity. How often does the known character of the architect for good-will affect the scale of the estimates he receives? To be able to count on details that will but skim the surface of the work, in which there may be opportunity for saving and profit, is an anchor of security to some craftsmen in making a low tender for a contract. And all this does not for one instant entertain the suggestion of any connivance or immoral act on the part of the architect.

The course of duty thus seems to bend toward the renunciation of all emotions which will conflict with a strict fulfillment of the bond of obligation between the man who employs and the man who is employed, since thus alone can the architect find safety for honor and reputation. Outside of these bounds the sea of favors is always in a state of flux, wavering and

uncertain as to strength of wave. While your heart beats to a tune of sympathy and good-will you thoughtlessly cast some of its bread upon the waters, and behold it is tossed ashore as sea-drift, some cannibal Godkin meanwhile seated shaded under a tree of justice and dining on its fruitage. Much pleasure may your realized ambition of good-will yield you while the matter of the repast thus goes forward !

II

Vulgarity

THE GUERDON OF VANITY



FEW of my business friends have failed at some time to enter the doors of the Fleetwell Bank, and once there, the alert face of Richard Bentwood, the paying teller, was sure to greet them. To many who did business in this money mart, the man and the bank seemed one ; while to have missed him from behind his familiar wicket during banking hours would have sent absent-minded creatures flying from the building, full of the error that they had entered the wrong door. But all these human beings who are apparent fixtures in commerce and trade have their real life, apart from the spot in which we daily see them. There are those who blossom out in the mellow idleness of a club room ; others hasten from their work to a nest of hearts, where home life centres in the wife and her flock ; and in both classes it is common to find the man with a hobby to fill

his leisure. For years Bentwood—he was one of the mated—had looked towards a house which he should himself build out of the accumulating fund he was laying aside for that special effort, and the study of what this house was to be became his hobby.

Bentwood had graduated from the dollar books of house plans, in which he had often invested in the past, and conceived a great respect for the genius of architecture. It became a passion with him, until even the president of the Fleetwell Bank dwindled in size and importance compared with some humble slave of the drawing-table, whom he chanced now and again to meet. He could fancy no higher plane of work than that occupied by those men who spent their time in planning delightful combinations of rooms and hallways, broad stairs and private stairs, pantries, “dens,” and what not. “It is a wonderful profession,” he was wont to say, “and is full of modest hard work. Just look at the way the daily papers ignore the name of the architect in their reporters’ glowing nightmares about our new houses! It is all Speedy, the builder, or Mortice, the stone-mason, or Hetzell, the decorator, as if

these men were more than fingers on the hand of the architect! And the way the gold-encrusted owners are lauded is enough to make you sick at the stomach!"

To such lengths of hero-worship can the minds of men run, that Bentwood's fancy constantly betrayed him. He fell into the habit of noting certain quiet-mannered men of the street throng, throwing upon their shoulders the silent burden of his belief that they were architects. High-browed map peddlers, who passed him with their wares encased in a neat roll, were often exalted in occupation by this bent of his imagination. To look for vulgarity in such a profession seemed to be a slur upon his own feelings.

It fell out, therefore, on one bank holiday at the end of bright spring weather, that Bentwood met with a singular set-back. He had ridden on a trolley car far into the suburbs, intent as usual on seeing what other people, whose hoards had grown ample, were doing in the way of house building. He remembered to have noticed at one point, on a previous visit, a growing structure whose dominant points took prisoner of his eye and heart, and it was one of the

special interests of his day's outing to see more of this same building.

Since his last visit the house had gone far towards completion ; the plate glass gleamed in the sun, and the painters' jacks were numerous, filled with men of the brush giving final touches. Every fragment of scaffolding had disappeared, and the ground was well cleared and already in the hands of the lawn-maker. But now, whether it was because the mystery of the scaffold-curtain had passed away, or for some other reason, the building seemed to have lost much of its attraction.

The effect on his mind was an imperfect impression which it did not occur to him to analyze, and the nearer he drew to the house the less strongly did it disturb him. He stood gazing at the building while his fancy took rapid leaps at the locating of the main rooms, the passion for personal inspection being held in check by two reasons : one a sign of largish dimensions, black-lettered " NO ADMITTANCE," and the other his own timid unwillingness to intrude when the owners might be present.

While still contemplating the exterior, the front door, bright in its fresh varnish, was opened

from within, and a man issued forth dressed in a suit of rough cloth, with an odor of fresh shavings about him, alert grey eyes, and a grizzled beard that would have made a barber ache with desire. He was followed by an entirely different looking person, a man young in years, bearing himself with a touch of foppishness and clothed in conventional afternoon attire. This last person seemed to be in a state of choler, and no sooner did his eyes light upon Bentwood than his language became profane. A fountain of disapproval found vent, and the flow of it fell upon the man who had preceded him.

Bentwood's sympathy went at once with the first-comer, whom he judged to be the builder. He understood it all. This poor man, like so many of his trade, was undergoing a tongue-thrashing from the owner. The insolence of the vulgar rich was not unknown to him, and he felt that his presence had only increased the desire of the man who paid the bills to exhibit his importance.

But the fountain was even now very suddenly checked by some other idea which the sight of Bentwood had, apparently, suggested to the

owner. As the two men approached, the latter turned politely to Bentwood and inquired if he would like to inspect the house. His whole manner had changed and courtesy became mixed with the fleeting traces of irritability.

To Bentwood, who had but a moment ago hated the man, this opportunity was too alluring, and he modestly signified that it would give him pleasure to do so, and with a few additional words he entered the house. Once inside he was troubled with the same feelings the exterior view had so lately created. Wealth alone could furnish the quantum of detail with which the hall was encrusted ; it bore down like a heavy weight upon the eyes and senses of the beholder, and while it was not all bad or ill-arranged, the final effect lacked dignity or repose. The impression was that of the flashiness of a bar-room, where we know that the expenditure has been made with the wish to magnetize the senses rather than enthrall them in the bonds of beneficent beauty.

While trying to arrange his rudimentary ideas and to find the exact cause of his feelings, Bentwood heard steps behind him and found that the owner was following him with further

intentions in the line of hospitality. He did not suffer Bentwood to wander around with unanswered queries as to the rooms, but fell to the task of making everything plain. The quality of the material, the superiority of the finish, the cost of the workmanship, were all forced upon him, and the fact that the details were absolutely 'original' was told with careful emphasis.

It was unpleasant to the sight-seer in every way. He had no chance to make that modest attempt at individual judgment, which was his wont : and while the sermon ran on he had a dizzy feeling, and wished to be gone. But his sense of courtesy held him prisoner from basement to garret, and back again to the hall. He secretly pitied the architect who had such a client, for surely, he thought, the life of the artist must have suffered torture. Through it all he was puzzled by something odd about the man's talk. It was a constant intrusion of his own personality as the creator of these things, a seeming obliviousness as to any other hand having wrought to produce the results before them. Finally, this procedure gave suggestion of a way to obtain some slight revenge. In the

hall, taking advantage of a slight pause in his conductor's remarks, he put the query, "Who was the architect?"

A spasm of surprise seemed to strike the other. He turned in wonder upon Bentwood; "*Why, I am the architect!*" he cried.

Just how he managed to escape from that house, Bentwood never knew. But when he did he failed to look back, and it was not until a friendly car had carried him far away that he roused from his feelings of nausea and disgust. The Waterloo of his hero-worship had come, passed, and gone; for months he could not rid himself of the bad taste this interview had left with him.

Several years have passed, and Bentwood has built his house. Harkins, the architect, who tried to make his own lamps burn so brightly, did not design it; but the man who did, being of another make, has restored some of the original enthusiasm of his client.

How much harm a man of the Harkins stamp does to himself is a matter of indifference. Abundant field is open to him amongst the vulgar rich, and his clients are not few in number. How much harm he does the profession

is a more serious thought. And, to go still further, the harm that even a less outspoken vanity invokes, is a sad reflection.



Modesty of spirit is close-wrapped with all good work in art. It is a safeguard and restraint which the artistic temperament needs every hour, since the creation of all works of art must be free from self-consciousness. To obliterate entirely every suggestion that the worker thought of what other people might think of him, is needful in securing the highest results, and is it not to achieve these that every man loving his profession must aim?

The ultimate effects of the development of personal vanity in an architect's work are common to all the fine arts. For the main part, it destroys his balance and calm by the introduction of an element not in touch or connection with his design—in simplest words, an affectation. The charm of all really good work is largely dependent on a simplicity and consistency which creates for the special purpose of giving to the world a complete expression of an idea. Wherever the designer forgets his scheme as a whole, and introduces a detail for the purpose of show-

ing how daring he can be, or how original is his mental portfolio, the completeness is marred and broken. The writer recalls a building distinguished amongst the "Architectural Aberrations," published in the *Architectural Record*, in which this evil found full play. As he was present in the office which gave it birth, he had an opportunity of witnessing the evolution of the design. Starting from a point of greatest simplicity, the result of which would have been an inoffensive building, distinguished by no marks of positive attraction or repulsion, the design became cluttered with the efforts of its originator to do surprising things. To have no precedent for either outline or detail was the dream of the architect, and to say that he was so far successful is to put it very mildly. His mental powers were constantly absorbed in efforts to evolve results which should owe all their parentage to him, and this spirit was busy breeding discords in its own nest. The disaster seems to break out in blotches all over the completed building, the most satisfying points being those due to the forced economy gained by the mechanical repetition of detail.

There can be no discourtesy to any one,

since the building alluded to cannot be here traced, in making the broad statement that the whole mistake of the design owed its origin to a constitutional egotism and vulgarity in the designer. He was a man whose tastes ran to the constant celebration of himself, and his efforts at self-display were a subject of remark amongst the people who knew him. He always failed to give any indication of respect or attachment for his adopted art ; his rewards appeared to be sought only in money and personal celebrity. Results with him, so far as detail and massing went, were always weak and depressing.

The reflex action on the character of the designer in the production of such work is quite as positive as its effect on the building. Long continued it becomes a vice that is sure in its grip, for any slightest perception of the error dies rapidly away.

Once hardened by self-consciousness, the elasticity of the natural mind is difficult to regain. In the sphere of manners and conduct we have an illustration of this in the lives of many artists of the stage. They cannot shake off the poses assumed in the mimic life, and so carry them into their contact with the real

world. Even so distinguished an actor as the late Lawrence Barrett had street mannerisms which were the reflection of some of the most successful of his stage characters.

This leads to the thought that the existence of great natural talent and strong tendencies towards personal vanity in the same individual is not uncommon. In some cases, so powerful is the self-mastery in the artistic sphere that the traces of the vice are scarcely perceptible. If anything, the very strength put forth in combat with this partly unconscious weakness serves to add vigor to the result of the artist's work. But this is only possible in men of great breadth and personal determination, and even here we have the question unanswered as to what better work they could have done had they been minus the weakness.



Vulgarity is one of the most common sins of architects at the present day. To say that much of the work done is free from it, is idle, for no one would assume to make so absolute a claim as to say that it was all vulgar. Even such a cockney criticism as Charles Eliot Norton is reported (it is to be hoped incorrectly)

to have expressed, that the outline of the American landscape is essentially vulgar, misleads no one but those feeble devotees of culture who imagine that artistic insight is measured by a languid disdain of everything American, a vain imagination as vulgar as it thinks itself refined. Yet when all is said for our architecture the balance seems to hang with the weight so far on the wrong side as to give occasion for putting the error in the pillory. Its existence is largely due to the rapidity of the age, for not only are men tempted into hurry in their work, but they are oftentimes driven to it, and the evils of competition add to the difficulty. To attain fullness of study requires the expenditure of time, not only in the execution of ideas, but in that period of incubation of ideas which is so marked a feature of all intellectual work. But the special kind of vulgarity for which there can be no adequate defense is that which finds occasion for display, not through the hard drive of necessities, but in the wilful weakness of men's temporary ambition.

What is artistically vulgar is, of course, forever an open question. The laity in judging

beauty, unassisted by familiarity with the subject, will generally bend toward that which exhibits to the artist crudity and display used for their own sake. As in literature the book touched with strong colors and unbalanced skill commands the largest popular audience, so the building most marked by unfamiliar or startling details will claim the eye of the people and for the while convince them that it is a work of genius. This may be a by-trace of the old desire of men to be deceived, which has given the conjurer a place through centuries.

But it is a well-known fact in legerdemain that repetition is a snare, and the audience soon tires of an effect the deception of which they can understand. Simple illusions, perfectly presented, have held each succeeding generation in the same bonds of pleasant mystery, and have neither wearied nor grown old. The comparison may seem undignified, but the public stands in about the same relation towards works of art. Wherever the enduring quality is present and the people can feel that somehow they have been given a piece of work that "hangs together," they will trim their likings to it and swear by it long after the more start-

ling work has faded from their minds. They may never understand the basis for their liking, but they are sure to give this unconscious tribute to real art, expressing it sometimes by a silence and caution in speech which ill-assorted and vulgar work does not receive.



The feeling that any piece of work is perfect is an impossibility to a mind untainted by vain inclinations. And in this respect vanity plays the devil with a man, because, as Schopenhauer says, vanity is the desire of rousing in others the conviction of one's own paramount worth in some particular respect, and is generally accompanied by the secret hope of ultimately coming to the same conviction one's-self : but once let a man believe that he has reached the goal of completeness, and forever after his purposes are limited, his horizon once for all a wall beyond which he can never advance to any larger outlook or finer insight. He is fettered by the fear that all the work that comes afterward will not meet the standard of perfection he presumes he has created, the very standard he has set up becoming a barrier over which he cannot climb. In most instances,

when a man has fallen into this evil, the one piece of work by which he sets store does actually become his most finished achievement, and the course of his art thereafter is all on the decline, each succeeding task being more liberally diluted, until by and by there is neither color nor character left. Some men have been saved at this juncture by the introduction of the architectural "ghost" which the London journals had so much to say about a few years ago,—the ghost, the reader will remember, being there represented as a very active creative draughtsman, who prepared the drawings which another man, as the architect, gave to the public. But ghosts in these days of seances have grown so commonplace that they seem a very poor support to rest a man's future on; at any rate, if I remember rightly, the London man found it but a slim solution of his own affairs.



There is a little circle of architects in one of our great cities, whose chat at certain rare meetings runs into those more intimate channels which fellowship and friendship foster. Not one of the group, perhaps, has any claim

to great talent, nor does any individual amongst them entertain false ideas as to his personal abilities. Their creed, if they could be said to have any, might read, in the words of Hamlin Garland : " If we insist on sincerity, the question of dignity will take care of itself. Truth is a fine preparation for dignity and for beauty as well." Separated as these men are in their daily lives, with no bond but the art they pursue, a dignified loyalty has always distinguished their relations. If through any chance one of them feels that there is danger of intruding on another's work, no straws are split in quibbling with the thought. Brown will run to Robinson's den and tell him the facts. A wants Brown to design a casino ; but then A was always Robinson's man ; why did he leave him ? Sometimes a tale of A's roguery is unfolded, which saves Brown from the possibility of labor lost and enables him to give his new client some useful hints on business morality. Or it may be that he finds that Robinson and A, having found mutual points of discord in the past, have smoked a peace pipe, but exchange wampum no more. One way or the other, the good fellowship between Brown and Robinson counts

to their advantage, and they have no reason for making wrong guesses at each other's actions.

What, in the name of all the virtues, you may ask, has this got to do with vulgarity? Nothing whatever, directly; but how long could such a spirit last amongst these men of the same work if they one and all were immersed in a belief in their own importance? The modesty of their self-estimation is the hinge on which turns the whole fabric of their fellowship, and the dwelling together of brethren in unity and peace has ever been a happy condition.

To-day, at a lunch counter, you met Harkins. He was sleek and comfortable. His bones were well covered, and no anxiety or fretting cares seemed to be likely to touch his day. His speech was full of assurance and marked with calm composure when he happened to mention, quite incidentally, that Charon's office was empty of draughtsmen. He had previously told you how busy he was; and the story of his last gilt-edged commission was fresh in your mind. But in a musty little shop a gray-haired old workman had pointed out to you, a week ago, some models made from details from Harkins' office. They were classic

in intention, but full of wild disorder in frantic attempt at "originality," as if the office boy and Vignola had met in battle. "The owner wasn't quite satisfied," commented the workman, modestly, "and we made it like this," pointing to another model. Charon, whose office is empty, would have died with shame over such things, but Harkins has got his fee and sails for Europe soon, for "study."

"The last illusion to forsake a man is the absolute belief in his own refinement," writes Le Gallienne, and the words are like a knell to the possibility of any change for Harkins and his fellows. But we all try to be sanguine on the subject of reformation, and our modern developments daily increase the number of institutions for that purpose. In the unfolding of every new life, however, lies the best chance at making an amended world for us, and time is when the buds receive more care than the speckled fruit. It is on this ground that these chance words are written. If the son of Harkins, who is growing up in his father's office, can but be touched by the web of better things he will live to cover, not only the ashes of his father's body, but the embers of his errors.

III

Eccentricity

THE DISDAIN OF THE COMMONPLACE



VER since an unfortunate devil, now comfortably lodged in an English jail, gave prominence to the sunflower, that poor plant has gathered enemies and friends. Its enemies, where no previous personal antipathy has created them, are largely formed of people whose instincts oppose all things made notorious by passing fancies or fashion, and its friends are composed of those who loved to see the great yellow disks sprawling in the sun long before the days of Oscar Wilde. But the flower has suffered harm by its passing prominence, and few can speak of it or think of it, without memories of the caricatures and burlesques into which it has been woven. It seems to be a jealous law of the world that whatsoever is touched by farce or comedy must forever after lose a part of the pristine fame which we once instinctively attached to it. The world system is

founded on a species of commonplace ; what we call the freaks of nature are always abnormal growths and we study them as curiosities, not as the outcome of natural order. In the individual life of man, oddities often add a charm to character, but repeatedly forced upon us they cause ridicule and sometimes disgust. The natural man has the greatest and longest-lived attraction for us all. His presence does not tire because it always seems in unity with the day. He carries no card in his sleeve to constantly force upon us in the game ; we are on terms of equality.

In the composition of a comic opera, which created its period of craze and attraction a few years ago, there were a certain number of wise men or oracles, whose approach was always heralded by several chords of odd music. At every juncture where their presence was desirable, the ear first caught this strain, and after the first act the characters and the music were firmly wedded in the mind. The same feeling seems to go with all "odd" creatures in life ; we have some premonition of their presence before we actually come in contact with them and the old overture is played at every entrance.

The craving to be eccentric is frowned upon by society for the best of reasons. It disturbs the balance and harmony which are so essential to well-ordered relations. There are degrees of dress beyond which a man cannot trespass without infringing on these conditions, and in the matter of his behavior still less license is given. All persons possessed of violent or determined natures rebel at these unspoken mandates, and seek to set at defiance the ruling of a court, which, in this particular, they do not wish to recognize. Yet they gladly cling to any laws which will give relief from an annoyance obnoxious to them as individuals.

The unwritten mandate against eccentricity is not only a factor in society, but in art. The offense is here more open and permanent. It affects a greater number of units, because art is so widespread in its presentation and endures, not for the lifetime, but the centuries. That which is created to stand as a monument should be free from the frothy pettiness sought only at a capricious edict from the court of public fashion. All architectural creations marked purely by whim have no more claim to perpetuity than the mimic structures of sugar

icing on a confectioner's cake ; transient they are in character and with threat of staleness written upon them from the twelfth hour after conception.

There is constant danger of confusing the terms "eccentricity" and "originality," and the last word, by the way, is a sad humbug. To be eccentric—we are thinking now of architecture alone—is to create forms and combinations which shall claim attention largely from their novelty, which shall give a sensation of surprise to the mind. The forms and combinations are not necessarily bad art to produce this impression ; the fault lies in their being placed improperly or in wrong juxtaposition. But the gross quantity of errors in this line grow from a careless disregard for the serenity of pure expression. The material for the production of the best results will often lie to hand, ready for the architect's use, but prompted by the thought that many other workers have followed the same motives, he will aim in willfulness to outdo the past and to create effects which shall have held no place in the vocabulary of expression of other men. To spring a pointed arch, for instance, across the whole area of a

building's frontage, without respect for the fact that the side piers could never take the thrust if the arch were a real bit of construction, is a *motif* which casts sand in the public eye and by the daring feeling of its lines may produce on the every-day beholder a temporary impression of power. But the deception is a trivial victory, and the real level of the work is soon found out. The deceit relegates the whole design to a position much lower in the scale than if it had possessed the most ordinary character.

We have constantly to remember that the greatest monuments of the world, those buildings which hold their place in the judgment of man, even though the process of actual decay is well advanced, have no features that are not the simple outcome of consistent study. Many mediæval buildings are incongruous in detail, and have features in no wise short of eccentricity, but these details are not parts of the composition as we understand to-day the designing of a building. They are accounted for by the simple fact that one mind rarely conceived and executed a complete building in those early times, and the license permitted to

other hands who finished the work produced the quaint and novel effects. To design a building from the standpoint of these ancient models and to thrust into it elements which only the chance of time has placed in the original, is as bad in spirit and intention as to cultivate the growth of lichens on shingles in order to court the romance of age.

The romance of expression in architecture can be created on more honest lines, although to aim after such feeling for its own sake is bad practice in any case. The true poetic or romantic expression,—that which lifts the book, the painting or the building out of the level of every-day thought,—is best obtained by a thoroughly honest presentation of the subject. This method was characteristic of the work done by Richardson. In nearly every building designed by him, the romantic feeling predominates ; yet the effect is produced by no false measures, and even in that most distinctive excursion into the realms of the un-ordinary,—the Easton gate lodge,—the quaintness is the outcome of legitimate necessities. It is true that he built a tower at Pittsburgh, the height of which is the keynote of the composition, but the rooms inside

its massive walls have a distinctive use in view which disarms criticism.

The madness of the desire to kill the commonplace is most pronounced to-day in suburban architecture. Designing in frame and tractable materials allows more latitude for the extravagance of whim. It does not affect the cost to such a degree as in buildings made with sturdier materials. There is opportunity for the most astonishing superimposition of masses because the structural laws are not so binding. Huge towers may rest on columns much less in diameter than a man's thigh and lift their heads in contented security over the slope of a shingle roof. Roof-ridges may express a curvature of the spine and walls be fairly rotten with rusticity ; the very chimneys, on whose uprightness so much depends, can straggle aimlessly toward the sky. All these effects and ten thousand more, of varying shades of artistic villainy can be realized at a modicum of expense. There are architects who have made a reputation by them in the past, and the effort is still being attempted in fresh ways.

That this is not architecture, but jugglery, is patent : yet the disposition to outvie some

other man's creation has tempted architects to take a hand in the crime. The view of some of our modern suburban settlements where this game of "do-me-one-better" has been practiced is almost justification for the depredation of the fire-bug.



No necessity exists for the deadening of original composition in its true sense. There are opportunities always present for the right expression of every idea for which an architect can be called upon, and yet the result shall be acceptable in the sight of the strictest judgment of the gods, and neither Jones nor Robinson claim that it was filched from their work. It is the endless, restless stir to be "novel" that forms the sin of the disdain of the commonplace.

Novelty always suggests the sense of the recurrent, not of the permanent. Lack of permanence brings to mind the idea of instability, and this is first evidence that novelty can play no part in genuine architectural work. With tree-dwelling tribes it might be possible to have novel effects in large doses and yet do no injustice to the art, but with the more stable

builders it is an impossibility. To be entirely satisfactory the sensations attendant on the sight of any architectural creation must first embrace this sense of permanence to make it a true monument, no matter what degree of dignity its uses may imply. The more pronounced the feeling, the higher the scale of the building's nobility ; always excepting that impression of stability created by false means. The details of the work, in order to carry this expression to the fullest desirable limits, must be lost sight of as special or distinct features : there must be no emphasis on any particular part of the building that would allow us to separate it from the mass and look upon it as an individual creation in itself. The kinship with the whole edifice should be so strong as to render the independent detail, when viewed by itself, broken and incomplete. To quote from Mr. Henry R. Marshall's *Aesthetic Principles* : " Vividness of impression is a well-recognized means of producing aesthetic results in its cruder form. Barbaric art shows this distinctly, and the art of the masses, even in our day, makes use of the same means. Vivid coloring and contrasts, startling forms and combinations,

vivacious rhythms, loudness of sound as in martial music ; all these are common tools for the popular artist. But we here tread on ground dangerous to permanency ; for hyper-normal activity, as we have seen, is the basis of pain as well as of pleasure, and pleasure which is determined by this alone must be of a very ephemeral character.''' And further on in the same chapter '' *Contrasts*, already discussed, also gain their effects through change of region of stimulation. Where notable, however, they depend upon vividness (hypernormality of action) for their results, and must be used with care lest they act exhaustively. The same thing may be said of those vivid elements of novelty which give the value to what we call the picturesque. We cannot use these means to gain aesthetic results unless we are able to turn ourselves away from their stimulation as soon as we begin to be weary. Hence, we should avoid the use of the picturesque in our homes, and should deal most carefully with strong contrasts in the decoration of rooms in which we wish to live, or in buildings which one is compelled to view constantly.'''

The universality of this desire for strong

self-expression,—for overbalanced effects,—seems to have reached a very high point at the present time, as evinced in the every-day amusements of the people. Compressed cakes of sensation are furnished at every pleasure resort, the latest craze being seemingly in “shooting the shutes.” Here for a fraction of a dollar one may crowd into a moment the sensations of a railroad accident and a shipwreck, and yet escape real peril. Concrete realism could seemingly wish for nothing more, but dare any man say this is the end? Epidemics of the ejaculative fever are always threatening, and they lay all arts under tribute.

It is time to consider a grave danger to the individual created by all eccentric tendencies. No mind can keep its balance where they absorb the thought and intention. At some period the grip on the sanities of creation will be lost, and henceforth the product of the sufferer's art will always be struck with the disease. Montaigne tells us that “Gallus Vibius did so well enure his minde to comprehend the essence and motions of folly, that he so transported his judgement from out his seat, as he could never afterwarde bring it to his right

place againe ; and might rightly boast to have become a foole through wisdom." You can easily recall instances of this lamentable condition, and no matter how great a mind may have existed in the misled one or how strongly his early work impressed the world with its goodness, the later results pass quickly from the best esteem of men. If no influence works a change in the character of the artist's intentions his designs are made a matter of current jest, and a mental blindness succeeds in which this self-made comedian fancies he is the recipient of attention because he is a genius.

On the excursion pier at a summer resort, the other evening, the writer heard a voice holding forth oratorically in the crowd. A man of twenty-five or thirty years, with a face which could bespeak for him no special mention, had fallen into a sort of general conversation with all those in the throng around him, and as the crowd was amused, it contributed only so much in the way of remark as to spur the speaker to renewed efforts to air his mind. Just how far the presence of any "spiritual" influence played in his veins was not evident, but all his talk of things high and

low, was the merest garble ; yet the man himself believed thoroughly in his poor wit and wisdom—the greater interest and encouragement displayed by his audience only exalting his self-esteem another peg and plunging him into desperate efforts to keep up the game. Women and men all joined in the hoax, and the regret for the poor creature's sake was that he did not seize the occasion to seek for substantial rewards. Presently the crowd distributed itself over the steamboat for which all were waiting, and our loquacious friend tried to command the attention of the cabin, but the pleasure-seekers were tired : they had enjoyed all of the motley they wanted, and the fellow's position fell lower than that of the deck-hands.

There are a great many men, neither fools nor cheap comedians, who do a trick now and then and fall into the error that the act holds place with the results of genius. To make a "hollow" detail, for instance: *i. e.*, a detail that expresses depth and strength and yet calls only for a veneer of material, has charmed men's minds into complacent channels. They have effected a novelty which secures the admiration of the cheap builder and holds his

orders. Its staying qualities, in two directions, are, of course, another question. The honest indignation of my dog at the inanity of china pugs is a protest of the truest quality against the desecration of reason. He cannot understand the necessity for such absurd caricatures ; they simulate life to his eye, and yet their stony immobility, their utter dumbness, transgress on the vibrant, active emotions which his own feelings teach him are proper for a true dog. It is a case in which "repose" is not a virtue but an abnormal condition.

The noticeable demand which the public have recently made for buildings designed in the simple classic forms of Greek and Roman work is not entirely due to the architect. For years the restless, unsettled spirit of buildings of the most conglomerate description has satiated the people with discordant novelty. At every Eastertide it is said that the world of fashion welcomes the repose created by the season of religious devotion, and nerves and sensations that have been visited by every novelty and excitement, are as amorous of rest as they were before eager for the bustle. The tide of feeling has carried the desires of people

as to their buildings in somewhat the same manner. We have recently had the Easter season of architecture. With considerable pleasure we can view the fact that its spirit is lingering, and likely to linger with us yet awhile. Men and women find their desires better met in reposeful buildings. In more senses than one they are better investments, and this must ever be a leading consideration. But the primary appeal to the restfulness—we may almost say the homeliness—of life, is the stronger factor in governing this wave of public approbation. It is a warning to every man who has foraged the field of novelty and sought details and whole conceptions amongst the heterogeny of the past. They burn away as quickly as the wax tapers on the banquet table, and just as the remnants of these lights are thrown into the rubbish heap when morning brightens the disordered room, so the buildings with chimneys modeled from barbaric towers and sculpture wrought in the spirit of devotion to the *bizarre*, are cast aside and forgotten. Scattered over the entire eastern district of the United States are buildings jealously guarded, not alone because they

represent the early motions of our building spirit, but because they in themselves possess qualities of attraction, traits of positive simple character, setting forth the artlessness of true art. They are not great except in dignity, but they are all we have of the past upon which to look with appreciation.

So long as the development of the eccentric is sought or entertained by us, what quality of remnant will posterity receive? And while it may seem a small matter for what the children's children care there should stand out in every generation a desire to hold honor with the future and leave records which will deserve care and perpetuation. The permanent results of our work—as in our narrow sphere we must call them—ought to be so instinct with simple truth-seeking, that “as an olive falls off when it is ripe, blessing nature who produced it, and thanking the tree on which it grew,” the fruit of our lives lived in our art should leave a goodly tree for the kindly feeding of another century.

There is a beauty born of simplicity that touches more than the intellect. It invades the heart and makes it captive. The old build-

ings of the colonial period in both the north and south are by this given vital life, and their presence preserves the feelings with which the hearts of their former owners were most likely filled when they looked upon them. The instinct of affiliation, through attachment of eye and heart, is so valuable, that architecture can add to its own power by seeking to strengthen it. In that delightful drama, the *Maister of Woodbarrow*, which Mr. Jerome wrote and Mr. Sothern so ably interpreted, every past auditor remembers the scene of return to the old home after the dash of the young fellow into London's whirl. Raw as the contrasts must always be, perforce, on the stage, through the requirements of the time limit of the performance, yet the conviction here seemed to rest unimpaired. It did not create surprise that the old kitchen with all its touches of rusticity was a lovelier place than the town house of fashion. There was no glitter of the novel or unusual, but there were the better things that go to make the real rewards of living. No return of the wanderer to a modern dwelling in which the architect had displayed even the mildest combination of

un-ordinary and startling sensations would have been artistically possible in the play ; the audience would have been chilled, as when in some homely assembly, the fingers on the piano keys turn from the simplicity of " Bonnie Doon " or the " Last Rose " to an intricate creation of Wagner. Human sympathy chords with what it can follow ; every intimate touch which it can meet and appreciate calls forth the reward of its applause and love. And men do not necessarily have to seek only in country kitchens for their designs of living-rooms. There are rooms created to-day quite as full of attraction, in a distinctly modern sense, as was this bit of scene-painting, just as there are modern men and women to fill them as acceptably as Deborah and Rachel and Allen did in the play. Nor is the limit of creation on simplicity's ground to be reached alone in dwellings, but in all sorts and conditions of buildings ; so that the town-hall, the bridge approach, the business block, or the railroad station will all claim the wanderer's heart and yield him sources of restful attachment which no collection of novelties will be likely to give.

Full of desire as the world-spirit is for

novelty and change, it rests alone in sincerity. "When I came at last to Rome," says Emerson, "and saw with eyes the pictures, I found that genius left to novices the gay and fantastic and ostentatious, and itself pierced directly to the simple and true ; that it was familiar and sincere ; that it was the old, eternal fact I had met already in so many forms—unto which I lived ; that it was the plain *you and me* I knew so well—had left at home in so many conversations." So the recurrent tides of the world are always sweeping away the rubbish and exalting the honest remnant to its true place. No man can hold against the tide or gain prowess in such attempts. He is helpless if in discord with natural law and bravado only makes him sink the deeper. The extravagance of idea that carries his work away from sanity and honesty can give no fair harbor to his fame nor fill his life with its best rewards.

IV

Indifference

THE SNARE OF EVASION



YOU can count on no fixed system in this world, it seems, after the limited express has played you false a half dozen times. Even the ebb and flood appear to be but names which men have given to an occasional whim of the water. As for the small matters of every-day business, in which we ask for punctuality, how many of us, in our secret souls, ever expect to be accommodated? Underneath all the frowns and bluster there exists a quiet consciousness that, after all, we had counted on being disappointed.

So common in all our dealings is this margin of extenuation that it takes a place like that of the "factor of safety" allowed in calculations as to the strength of materials. We are always checking it up as a possible chance against certainty, and when it proves a superfluous precaution the resulting surprise is full of the elements of gratified pleasure. Yet in

critical moments, when sudden illness is in the house, or an accident has put to the test all our resources, we expect the promptest arrival of the physician.

There is probably no profession in which the elements of unselfish devotion exist to such a large degree as in that of the surgeon and man of healing. On every moment of repose an emergency may break in, response to which is demanded, not in the name of self-interest or gain, but duty and humanity. While the man who is unfaithful to his calling through neglect of these urgent appeals is not always judged by the public in the most exact balances, his fellow-workers take grave and silent note of his shortcomings. The inevitable result of this professional judgment, by some law of its own, is to finally lower the standing of the delinquent before the community.

The test of faithfulness to duty bears on all the higher occupations of man, and in proportion as he is true or untrue to it, does the final world-verdict set his place. Other virtues may, for a time, hold judgment in abeyance, and people will kindly excuse the sins of omission, yet some too grave an error breaks the bound

of toleration. The writer recalls the words of a physician, who, in speaking of his architect, showed both good feeling and appreciation, but judged him by the laws of his own profession. The architect, be it said, was a lovable man, but sadly given to procrastination, and the physician-client had been more than once forced to excuse his tardiness in meeting engagements. "He is a good architect ; knows his work, but the devil himself would tire of his excuses. He never seems to appreciate the fact that *my* time is worth something. He draws on both it and my patience with the prodigal disregard of a spendthrift."

It is highly probable that the offender never thought anything about it. He reckoned his own time and season as such an intimate, personal affair that the effect of its loose administration on the employer's interests was entirely lost to sight ; so that the completion of his work was finally assured, the matter of a few days' delay here and there was a trifle. In the way of further study to secure the best results, he was entirely right, and even his client would gladly admit it, but in the mere business details of supervision a man's promptness ought

to always hold good. Hundreds—thousands of dollars are often at stake as the consequence of trifling delays, and the barometer of an owner's pocketbook is not to be despised, however far apart we choose to regard money and art. An architect must always look on wealth as existing solely for the expression of his ideas, and the economic conditions of its disbursement, are, therefore, of peculiar interest, bringing him a good or bad name as steward.

A plea must also be made for the man who puts into solid form the ideas of the architect. The builder is most successful in his work when it is promptly carried forward—where delays are avoided and the element of lost time reduced to a minimum. It is but fair that he should have full opportunity to enjoy these advantages and that they should not be lessened in number through the indifference of the architect. The relation between the architect and the builder thus becomes one of greater amity, and in many indirect ways the whole interest of the client is served to the best ends. No greater disadvantage can occur to any building project than to have the architect and builder at variance with each other. The best

dispositions are unsatisfactory in strained relations, and our common average of human life resorts to all sorts of meanness under such conditions. It is wisest, therefore, to take heed and court peace by all honorable means, not for the sake purely of the peace, but, as we said above, to best serve the interests of the client.

“The interests of the client !” you growl, “are we not always hearing this ?” And rightly : for is not the client giving you opportunity to put into shape those dreams, those ideas, those ambitions of your mind, and would they not be still-born without his aid ? Nay, put the position on yet higher ground ; a client is one under the protection of a patron, and your position is thus dignified by a relationship in which every best instinct is called upon. The client must be first thought of or your honor last. It is true that in this country, at least, the measure of the fidelity of an architect is no mean one so far as it concerns the larger interests of his art, but as has been said before, we are thinking mainly of the minor sins in this essay. There is an Eastern story somewhere, that tells how the jackal despised the

sands of the desert because they were so small ; yet a sandstorm buried the jackal. Small weaknesses are like all other vermin, multiplying rapidly and gaining a stronghold which the first mites seemed too weak to establish. Every fresh intrenchment makes them harder to fight and the measure of their stay is controlled by the earliness of the onslaught.

The dependence upon each minute touch for complete artistic expression has been set forth by all writers on art and exemplified in the work of all true artists. To slight a detail violates the integrity of the whole mass. It may not, probably does not, ruin the design ; but it is very much like a blot on your fresh desk-blotter,—you always see it while the blotter lasts. The misfortune in the similitude is, that while a fresh blotter is a small affair, a fresh building or a new detail is generally out of question. That this detail should err,—that it should betray any of the shortcomings, such as lack of study or “slurring,” is too often the result of a weak desire to evade the labor which would have made it right. Some transient affair has tempted the mind into another channel, or a feeling of temporary weariness has

broken in upon the enthusiasm of the designer, and it has resulted in the detail being weakened and its finer points lost. Occasionally there is chance to correct the error, to remodel the work, but most frequently it goes beyond recall.

Such mistakes, of course, are not a matter of public knowledge. They concern only the individual who allows them, since he alone is sensible of how far short falls his design. The client, the public, take the creation upon its face value, and their point of view is incomplete. The greater, therefore, the honor of the man who can see his completed work knowing that for the hour it holds his best thought. To-morrow, having gone thus far on his path of study, he may do better things, but this result expresses the fullness of his idea until sunset.

It is said of Daniel Webster that one of his maxims was, "Never to do a thing to-day that could be put off until to-morrow," and following this line of thought suggests that the postponement of your drawing might bring better results. In an ideal world, which we are not living in, it is useless to say, to-morrow is always

full of better promise. But as most of the work of the architect has utilitarian elements in the gross quantity, so far as his clients are concerned, to-day lays its emphatic touch on every action. The thoughts, the plans of to-morrow must feed to-morrow, and we cannot draw on them without falling constantly in arrears, nor will the client hold patience to be a virtue while his investment brings no interest or yields him no satisfaction.

Pardon is frequently claimed for these irregularities on the ground of the "artistic temperament," the argument being made that the impulses to creation in any art are so uncertain as to make clocks and almanacs useless to the artist. The fallacy of this belief, however, has been set forth by more than one writer on the methods of intellectual work. It has been shown that irregularity in work and catering to special moments of impulse must invariably weaken the productive character of the worker, that discipline must be insisted upon by the individual in his relations with his own powers. Philip Gilbert Hamerton displayed this quality in all the varied interests which his mind touched, and in his *Intellectual Life* he

states that "The object of intellectual discipline is the establishment of a strong central authority in the mind by which all its powers are regulated and directed as the military forces of a nation are directed by the strategist who arranges the operations of a war. The presence of this strong central authority is made manifest in the unity and proportion of the results ; when this authority is absent * * * * * you have a chaos of complete confusion ; when the authority without being absent is not strong enough to regulate the lively activity of the intellectual forces, you have too much energy in one direction, too little in another, a brigade where a regiment could have done the work, and light artillery where you want guns of the heaviest calibre." This confusion, resulting from a lack of discipline, is visible in much of the work of the architect that we see daily. Oftentimes it is so vagrant in its character as to lead to the thought that the man who did it knew no better, which is most always an injustice to the truth. The limit is not that of ability, but of purpose, and it is born of indifference ; and this indifference is itself too often but a mental excuse for failure in application. To

the mind filled with the illusions of art the call for "grinding" seems coldly material and at variance with the spirit of such matters. But what is apparently the most spontaneous work, viewed by the recipient as flowing with the easy grace of a fountain stream, must nearly always be born of prolonged study. The more freedom and beauty it exhibits, the harder we can generally believe was the task of the artist. To set traps of time and season to catch the right combination of sunbeams is a fruitless and resultless policy. The jelly will not come, as the housekeeper complains, neither will our finest moments of clear thought make engagements. The alliance of the thought and the opportunity must be steadfastly labored for, and in the toil of the search the matter grows plain. But, it must be noticed, this search for the missing idea which we *feel* the absence of, but cannot define, is not to be made a matter of lacerating endeavor. The seeking must be along lines of gentle enticement, as when one misses a wished-for memory of some fact or fancy, the answer comes most quickly when we carry on mental action connected with it, but not wholly wrapped in it. Then, as Dr. Holmes

says, "Perhaps some minutes (or hours) later, the idea we are in search of comes all at once into the mind, delivered like a prepaid bundle, laid at the door of consciousness like a foundling in a basket."



And it is not alone on the intellectual side that this temporizing with time and season causes disaster. As well in the moral status of our duties does it appear, as we said a few pages back, and by its suggestion we are led to deceive ourselves into believing in needs for cessation of labor when we are not tired but lazy, when the weariness that we claim is but the wantoning of the holiday spirit in our blood. A pleasant, cheerful spirit it is when under control, but latterly every lazy scamp is busy claiming his share of "nervous exhaustion" and laying at its door all the broken engagements, the mangled work and the unfinished labors which only need a few positive, energetic movements to be completed. This yearning after holidays seems to be ushered in at New Year's, and to continue with varying degrees of intensity until the thirty-first of December, nor has any year special freedom

from it. The engagements of a man to take some form of pleasure must alter all the ways and means of the people with whom he holds business relations. The gravity of some particular crisis in the building of your apartment-house is mocked at by Birdseye's flight to the shore, and you rebel at accepting the unbearded advice of his head draughtsman. It is Birdseye's brains you have bought with your money, and not a filtered solution of them. Your grocer may disport himself when and where he pleases; he leaves his wares on their shelves for your selection, and he himself is but a myth, a transfer agent through whose hands you pass your money to the real creators and manufacturers. With your architect you are on different terms; it is with the personal identity of his thoughts and opinions that you desire to be answered. Unless he anticipates the exigencies of your building and leaves full provision for them, he has no right to allow you to be defrauded by his absence. Harkins, one day returning from a gunning trip of a couple of weeks duration, met a good client of his at the very door of the elevator. The man's face was empurpled with rage, and he did not regard

the other occupants of the hallway. "You're a pretty loafer," he cried; "a nice specimen of a business man! I have waited a month for the drawings of my block, and I find you haven't even inked them in yet." "But my dear Mr. Standout," said Harkins, with his usual clever calmness, "you know all artistic matters need time, and my absence has in no way affected your work. I left the whole matter in shape for my draughtsmen to work out, and they must have nearly completed it." "And you yourself—were you so 'worked out' that you had to let some other fellow's brains play duty for you? I didn't want a commission merchant, when I came to you," and within a week the irate client had stolen Harkins' brightest man from his office and started him out in life by giving him the work, while over the payment for what he had already done Harkins had a lively lawsuit and—lost.

To take another aspect of the matter of unconcern, there are designs too often created which have received but a modicum of thought, turned out very much as the calico printer rolls off its yards of fabric, and finished rapidly in the spirit of thankfulness that so much more

work is done. The pride of the producer lies altogether in the mass of work which his office has produced, the sad, slate color of its uniform mediocrity being unrecognized. The quantity of buildings designed by such men is astonishing to contemplate, and makes one temporarily chary of advocating elaborate study. It would seem that success belonged to such methods, that the followers of them "knew what the public wanted." But we are fooled again if we believe this to be true, and we have forgotten that the people are more likely to be pleased with the sins of eccentricity, and not with baldness. The secret of the success of these men with their uniform designs lies in quite another channel. It is because they have devoted their energies to the economic side of building, because they can estimate to a nicety just how much of bricks and mortar can be gotten for a dollar, that their clients endorse them as good business men. "No extravagance there," they tell us. "My house had no extras, and Surewell told me just what I could do and gave me just what I wanted for exactly the money I had to spend." Result: the friends of that man flock to Surewell and from the

well-organized file of his designs more sad, slate-colored mediocrities are given birth. Surewell can afford to be indifferent; the higher realities of his art have never occurred to him, and as most men build but once or twice in their lives, it does not count that after a year or so they grow disquieted with their buildings and wish that Charon had made the drawings, even though *he* is said to sport with the nightmare of extras and persuade his clients they are necessities. If Charon had done the work they could feel a pride that is now forbidden them unless they sell out and build again.

The moment the curtain is rung up on any piece of building, every participant in the production must be on call. Some are in distant dressing-rooms, as it were, putting into shape the sections of the building which belong to their work, to be ready at the prompter's call; others are in the wings waiting for their cue to come on with mortar, trowel or brush, and the entire corp of laborers must give their constant attention to being ready to meet their special function. Until the curtain finally descends on the completed work, it is an incessant vigilance that broods over all. Through the whole scheme

of the production the architect is in constant requisition as stage-manager, and his absence at a critical point will set all the mechanism of action at fault. The illustration can be carried further, since he must be the referee in disputes general and personal, the arbiter with the final word.

When the judge is absent from the bench and the tipstaff mounts the rostrum of justice, we have a scene of ignorant administration. The sweet will of the whim of the mason may run counter to all your plans if his darkness receives no enlightenment from your presence. Your surety for the wholeness of any important item can only be granted when your own judgment has passed upon it. It is the pain of the executive; one of the demands for exhausting labor through which the world-spirit sets a higher stamp upon your calling.

V

Insincerity

THE WOLF IN THE FOLD AND OUT OF IT

DESPITE all the contempt for consistent action in life, expressed by some philosophers, it is certain that our warmest feelings qualify consistency as a virtue. The candid and the true hold a permanent place in our esteem ; it is of but little moment whether the declared principle be in accord with our own feelings, so there be no concealment, no veiling of the real under a sham garment. The child's spirit of sincerity, unsmirched by pretence, claims the heart at once ; the freshness and genuineness of the emotion playing upon the soul as some delicate and refreshing music. Maturer life appears to bind us about with a web whose filaments hold in check all our best instincts of charity and faith. To buy purity or wholesomeness in any article seems overwhelmingly difficult, though it be vouched for by the most sacred seal of the manufacturer. Even professional advice is

scanned for its value ; behind every given judgment there lurks a distrust lest the elements of it be unsound. These tendencies all help to enhance the value of sincerity when found ; not in the most happy way, it is true, but through the belief in its rarity. We may almost label the quality golden sincerity, since the market appears at all times to be short of both the metal and the virtue.

However pessimistic this may sound it is such an old feeling as to have become almost a truism, since our best efforts at faith in the quality of sincerity are always receiving rude blows. The fresh sunrise of every morning stimulates the soul to new trust, just as sunset counts the disappointments to our ideal beliefs. To the individual there can be but the one solution ; he plays his part as an atom, so let him give to the world his quota of the best that he has in his pack. Having done this much he may occasionally turn his thoughts, not in ridicule or stiff judgment, upon the movements of his fellow-travelers, bearing in his mind the words of Marcus Aurelius : " As thou thyself art a component part of a social system, so let every act of thine be a component part of social

life. Whatever act of thine then has no reference, either immediately or remotely to a social end, this tears asunder thy life, and does not allow it to be one, and is of the nature of a mutiny, just as when in a popular assembly a man acting by himself stands apart from the general agreement."

While the lines of insincerity in life touch on a thousand issues, we shall here concern ourselves with its appearance in the sphere of the architect. There are three ways in which the profession, as a class, display insincerity : with their fellow-workers, with their public, and with themselves.

With their fellow-workers its most prominent phase is the absence of that fellowship of manners which we are tired of calling ethical, since modernly that word has been dragged in the dust. The subject has been considered in essays, debated upon in public and private, the net result being a few more faded words, a few more forgotten pages gone to their long home of the dust-bin. The whole matter has been raised up as an idol of brass on which passers-by occasionally sound a hollow note of alarm, scared frequently by their own boldness,

and which the sacred spirit of the subject quickly deadens into solemn silence. The business approaches the verge of the ridiculous. Frankly, a mob of school-boys can do better. They cry "fair play," and know what it means without deification, nor can all our summing up of the ethical relations between man and man carry more weight of sense. Indeed, we might learn further wisdom from them in seeing how they treat the errant. Through the whole year, upon every playground, souls are saved from careers of meanness by the straightforward justice that is quick to bestow demerits and as prompt to receive the erring back to comradeship through repentance..

The creation of a nobler fraternal feeling, the lack of which mars so many professional lives, offers no suggestion of a martyr's block to the individual. Such conditions of living, indeed, can be said to pay back the holder with rich interest by making his life react on himself. There is no trace of the trades-union of which appearance so many are fearful, and it is not summed up in a banded effort to compel the public to obey its behests as to wages. In fact, we might well wipe out every item of

that troublesome subject, charge for services, and let the foundation of our mutual relations rest on something nobler. Let it be a fraternity of trust in quite a different sense from the modern application of that word, implying rather that we are not afraid to hold intercourse with our fellow-workers lest they steal a commission from us. It may sound overly ideal, but there is no good reason, for instance, why men in honorable competition for the same building should not criticise one another's work while in progress. The gain in such action would be mutual. From it would spring a broader conception which all might share, incidentally brought about by the revelation of weaknesses which the criticisms would yield. The resultant in each individual case would be a finer effort. And if there is a man amongst us too mean to value such privileges except for a low and sneaking end, let him receive the treatment of the playground or the ballfield. The world is well policed for fair play if it can but get a hint of it, and judgment is quick and hearty, no matter how skeptical you may feel about it.

The end of the wire-puller and the drum-

mer ought to come quickly. It is a standing stain against the profession and a trip-stone for the new members of it. A young man who with high purposes enters on his career as an architect is met with suggestions from his business friends that there is but one road to success, that he too must hustle for trade. To these advisers the every-day shading of a discount to secure orders, the swelling words of self-endorsement, and the IXL-brand-lie are but legitimate weapons to gather business ; the whole commercial world admits the practice. And if the beginner, who has revered Charon in the conduct of his art, is shown that he too traffics with the public on the butter and cheese principle, his aims and ambitions to live in accord with better things are quickly lost. One or two such examples and he joins hands with all who plot and scheme to trap the prospective builder, so that his most carefully acquired art is rather to lure clients from his fellow-worker across the hall than to seek to gather them by the innate goodness of his own work. The moral decadence is only kept in bounds by the fact that Charon and many others are not schemers or fishers of men, but

whole-souled fellows, bound by better ties. The influence of their lives, shedding enrichment on the cause of fair play, holds the balance. Yet this happier influence is too scarce to-day ; truly it requires a sternness of virtue that has to fight hard for life. The commercial instinct gains strength with every fresh accession of years to the world, and the purest ambitions are often driven behind their last intrenchments. The temptation to meet guerilla warfare by kindred return is dazzling our moral well-being at every day's march. It is no easy matter to be bound by good principles while an interesting building, the designing of which should have been ours by natural right, is quietly appropriated by some pushing fellow. The resultant emotions may very well voice themselves in the words of a noble-hearted physician whose reflections on the subject in his own profession had aroused his indignation : " Damn professional ethics ; will these fellows look after my wife and babies if I die to-morrow ? " No, as my friend said, they would be very sorry—it is easy to mourn the death of the virtuous—but to use the common speech of the day, they had their own troubles.

Yet there is a note of buoyant hope in the fact that this outburst of remonstrance was in itself insincere. Despite the fact that his professional brethren would not care for his wife and babes if the time came for his slumbers to be broken no more by the call of the suffering, his purpose to follow his code and live up to it was undiminished. It is not always that a man feels with any real confidence that he can hold to a chalk line in the conduct of such endeavors, but his limited best is full of a fervor which his followers may feel and by which they may be strengthened.

Lower depths we find where men deck themselves out with the attributes of fair play, presuming on the possession of the spirit by others and assuming its guise to carry forward their own insincere ends. A story is current of Harkins and his application of business methods, where being party to a church designing competition he allowed his competitors the most obliging advantages : their time with the committee was in the freshness of the evening, and their modest presentation of their drawings—it was one of those barbaric open sessions, founded on former ignorant ideas—was

listened to with attention and respect. But when the weary art critics, who had spent their whole day in bartering shoe-blackening and pork, reached the end of the line, Harkins suggested a delicate repast which he had ordered, and in the fullness of the good-will thus inspired the wily one received his reward. Yet the blare of Harkins' moral horn is ever to be heard in the van of "ethical" progress, and you who read this cannot tell when your hand may dip in the same dish with his at some gathering of the profession.

Companionship with men who mark their cards is as transient as a rope of sand : we want none of it in any game. No man aches to be deceived, and in the circle of his own occupation every such experience is ten-fold repellent. After an episode, such as that just related, the distrust did not settle entirely on Harkins. A transient cloud passed over all the participants in the competition, so far as their mutual feelings went. A doubt took shape as to what man amongst them would not have used the same methods had he been beforehand in his plans. "The public was made to be fooled : long live the public !" sang Harkins, and his

companion competitors ever heard a faint refrain, "and the profession, too," so that they looked from one to another, searching for the author of the sound. Elements of discord ran high for a month, until the real black sheep became so strongly individualized that concord and mutual trust returned. Yet for a long period the dupes of Harkins were infected with the dead spirit, and it is idle to tell that the sound of his footstep in the hall of his neighbors was the signal for covered drawing-boards and dead silence as to the names of clients.

Insincerities are piled upon one another in masses wherever this distrust prevails. They are not alone the source of distrust, they further it. And this where the conditions for good demand the utmost frankness and freedom. Can any profession achieve its highest place, fill its life with vitality and strength, while such a spirit exists amongst its members? Or how far can the fuller unity of an art with its public be expected where such knavish rivalry is known? Words cannot condemn conditions of this sort : only determined action, setting the rough seal of ostracism upon the offenders, can do it.



The public, which makes up the constituency of the architect, is varied in character. There are many whom reading and travel have put in sympathy with the work ; others who have yet to learn the first ideas of it ; some filled with timid longings after it, and a mob who seek it like barbarians. With each one of these classes the architect holds different relations, graded from pleasurable experiences to the most unpleasant, and toward each one he has a duty to perform, apart from his actual work. To fill the several functions rightly can alone give the best results.

With the class of clients whose acquaintance with the art of building is not confined to their neighbor's dwelling or store, but who can look into a portfolio of photographs with intelligent eyes, the responsibility is, perhaps, least onerous. Their besetting failing will probably show itself as a desire to incorporate details or *motifs* which their fancy has gathered from many sources, the incongruity of which they must not be expected to apprehend. To promise them such a conglomerate creation would, of course, sacrifice every

principle of the artist, yet the crime is often committed out of mere timidity, and the architect wrestles in vain to bring some harmony from his self-imposed discords. The client gets his building and his fancy, but his best interests are by no means advanced. If anything, his education in the art,—and this is one of the special functions of the architect towards the client,—is aborted, and his idea of what is good and proper is inclined to cling to that special concrete possession of his own, believing of it all sorts of favorable things which have no foundation. It was the privilege of the architect to lead him towards a result, which, while pleasing him just as well in its fullness, would at the same time give to his artistic side a permanent and genuine possession. It would be quite unheard of in any reasoning community for a sick person to demand that his physician give him his own choice of a remedy, refusing to take any other, and in the matter of art work, the man who professes to guide and create for the public must possess the physician's empirical privilege. It is just as insincere to the interests of this client to allow him to be the dictator as it is, in the instance of the sec-

ond class mentioned above, to force upon them a building towards which they have no attraction of instinct, domineering their minds with the false idea that it is what they want. No matter how devoid of knowledge they may be, they at least know the colors of the sky and can tell whether the sunset touched with gold or the red disk in the cloud bank yields the most pleasure to them. So in color and mass these unconscious desires must be worked out by the artist that the result of his labor may not alone give *him* satisfaction, but those as well who are to possess it. The people without definite ideas are very much like children, and the forcing process with young minds is too well known.

To deal with the third class, the shy souls with their ideals formed but unexpressed, who take a suggestion gladly and seem themselves stimulated to thought by it, is one of the consolations of the rough days of an architect's life. Their instincts are so quick that the debate over a sketch-plan becomes as a conversation with a second self. It is neither forcing nor leading, but united progress. What woe, then, when they fall into the hands of the

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unsympathetic,—the man who makes every suggestion in a covert sneer at their leadableness and whose ideas are accepted even when they do violence to the ideals of the modest client ! They feel that they have come to this man for information and guidance, and must put their trust in him ; he feels that they are weak in assertion, and his self-will dines on their shrinking. Let the last class come upon him, however,—the blatant, emphatic people who would buy Notre Dame, if they could, and re-erect it in Central Park—and his position is again false ; for instead of asserting himself, as right necessity demands, he becomes compliant before their will and their purse.

In his relations with all these people, and again in relation to the two broad classes, those of wealth and those of modest means, the architect is called upon to deal frankly with their interests. He has no right to plunge the rich client, simply because he is rich, into expenditures which are not justified by some thoroughly artistic end ; nor in the opposite extreme has he privilege to endorse an economy whose results he knows will be inimical to the best interests of the moderately well-off. With each

division of people he must use the same nicety as in calculating the strength of a tension-rod or modeling the outline of a cornice. To the acquirements which Vitruvius sets down as the equipment of an architect, we might add that of being a sociologist.

It is a habit with some men to be insincere with their clients. They may try to magnify their profession into a mystery or they may seek to show it possessing the simplicity of a child's building blocks ; they may veneer every expression of the art with a high-sounding title drawn from the historical precedents of style, thus tickling the ignorant with some fulsome conceit ; they, perchance, give the most weighty reasons for the adoption of that particular method or idea which, naturally, ought to require no advocate, and gain a reputation for wisdom by so doing ; through all the phases of the art of building they seek to trip the client's wisdom and gull his best judgment. That this is mostly done without any direct personal end being furthered is no defence. It is living out a spirit of quackery and humbug,—increasing their own discredit when chance opens up the real truth to the unsophisticated. And the

interests of a profession are like the interests of the State. Every act of the individual against the best principles of the whole body affects the unity of that whole as well as the independent atom. Properly, there are no independent atoms, as all modern social philosophy is trying to teach, and breach of faith in any station threatens the welfare of the mass. We are bound together by a syndicate of mutual trust.

Every architect, therefore, owes the fullest frankness to his employer on all matters connected with his art, seeking by his association to make a friend, and, as it were, a pupil of his client. And no necessity follows from this to give a reason for his every act, or to endlessly explain his methods. Rather should they by the impress of their own results give the key to the reason, as the development of the drama gives the theory of the dramatist. In some such fashion as this must the world be won to an understanding and appreciation of all that which is for the best in architecture.

The reactive effects of insincerity, developed through the weaknesses in the architect's actions towards his profession and his clients,

completes the sum of the evil. The process is the same as in all other matters of life in which untruth plays a part. The fibre of the natural being is poisoned and infected. The association of the man with his fellows and his clients is constrained,—a lurking watchfulness must be ever ready to meet the ambuscades into which insincerity traps its victims. The weakness is like a wound in self-respect, and to hide it, when conscious of it, (and when is consciousness too blind for this?) is ever such a matter of thought as to deprive natural expression of its full play.



It is a crowning triumph in the living of this life of ours to be sincere with ourselves—to be not acquiescent to the mote in our own particular system of vision or prone to color it with the assurance of self-deceit. Insincerity, displayed towards the remainder of men—which is always the world minus yourself—is bad enough; but when the same vice aims its influence to enthrall the personality of a man, and makes him a liar to his own soul, the situation is indeed marked with ignoble weakness. For to be true in the application of sin-

cerity to that which man can alone claim as his one unalienable possession, his soul, is the foundation for extension of the spirit into all its creations. It has already been stated that the architect is primarily untrue to himself in being untrue to the two classes with whom he is most closely associated in his work—his profession and his public. But outside of this, the veil of self-deception is frequently drawn tightly in other ways—drawn over truths which there is either unwillingness to recognize or inability to perceive.

The morality, that as the deeds are, so shall the rewards be, has been attacked on the score of truthfulness long before this present day ; but it seems a good rule to hold to time-worn wisdom, even though we have been bitten by it, for the newly-minted stuff may be quite as uncertain. And taking this morality as having worth in its meaning, a man is certainly at fault in failing to keep his work on the highest plane of his possibilities. To allow them to peter out into some form which he knows is below the tide-level of his abilities is unfair to himself, both in respect to the common instinct for bread and butter and the ambition for

remembrance. A man must question himself daily as to his work, seeking to create a form of self-examination which will keep his standard gaining new altitudes in spite of the earthly drag. It is not a question as to "Is it worth doing?"—for, as Stevenson says, "When it shall have occurred to any artist to ask himself that question, it is implicitly answered in the negative,"—but as to whether it is *the* thing which he should have done? To be firmly convinced of this fact would seem to be always prompted by a man's first desire, but it is not. Too often the ready wit of the condoning instinct is quick to step in and offer reasons why the mind should refine no further, or when it has refined too far, why it should take no backward tread toward undoing the fault. The strongest ambition is not proof against this temporizing with the instinct to loving labor which is privileged, and not dictated, by the art a man follows; the Book of Proverbs will even furnish the enemy with weapons, and the argument for the nullity of all effort under the sun, made to stand graven against us.

But as the manufacture of proverbs is said to be a poor business in the way of keeping

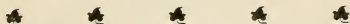
the larder filled, so applying the principle of the vanity of all things to questions of integrity in work may yield like results. The half-done design, the plan meagre in its evidences of study, the specification in which one may read blanks between the lines: all these have the smallest chance of holding a clientage in any bonds, and surely not in those of choice remembrance. They are constantly apologetic, forever reminiscent of failure, always seeking pardon as for a child's truancy. A man may fail, may slip through accident or carelessness, and no unjust brand of final failure be put upon him ; but to be a consistent skulker in the march of one's work, to always know that the last piece of effort has no more honest claim to fair judgment than the veriest essays of early practice—that, in fact, it lacks even the embryo enthusiasm of such a time ; surely there can be no hope here for remission.

Of what substance are the men made who can preach and lament over the dead subject of the "standing of the profession," while they hold their place in the ranks with stone-dumb hands and thoughts, seeking no remedy in the

living of their own careers? Manhood, calling for the police, and in no way seeking to anticipate their arrival by taking active steps to intercept an offender, is of but poor texture; and may we not sometimes suspicion that the outcry of such alarmists is but a feint to aid in their own escape as the real culprits? The problem as to how to place architecture on higher ground, not only in the estimation of the public but in actual fact—artistically, practically, and in every way which the mind may conceive for the betterment of an art, requires that the individuals who practice it shall make their effort tell, each one in his own place. It is not by yielding to the common demand of the public for samples of “what we can do” for each promising client; nor by allowing that public, irrespective of their ignorance, to be the measurers of our ability; nor by permitting them to quote us our wage at will; nor by giving them any other privilege that does not harmonize with the weight of responsibility which the art brings to us—it is in none of these ways that we can do substantial work to help better the “standing of the profession.” The sincere help, the help

that will tell, requires sterner grain than to yield personally to these weaknesses whilst writing essays or voicing laments. It must be touched and annointed with personal sacrifice, filled with the enthusiam of disregard for the inconveniences or deprivations which it usually has to face. It must seek to uphold the kingdom by first becoming a subject. So far as the dignified relation of architecture to the public as a profession goes, the humblest practitioner who has striven to enforce wholesome presentation of himself does more than all of the Jeremiahs whose laments run in three-league boots ; and held in the same scale of estimation as these preachers of insincere discontent should be the wordy resolutions committed to the minutes of our architectural societies and politely buried until such time as casual resurrection is called for by some worthy man who is ambitious to amend, alter or strike out. The dumb, scare-crow ordinances of the world are but bugaboos for the childish-minded, to be kept in quiet limbo until opportunity calls for judgment on the " other fellow," just as civil service reform, with a vast number of people, means a reform which shall gape

the jaw of opportunity for them if they be disposed to gain some position ; but which, on the other hand, shall not disturb the well-fixed solidity of a present encumbency. We are so wound up in the insincere coil of self that we think of a Calvary only as an adjunct of another's life, and an untoward event in our own.



How to define all the insincerities with which, as architects, we swamp our individual lives?—their number and their insidiousness appall a stout heart. We are ever betrayed by them in constant recurrence as our standard is shifted by the ebb and flow. Yet the gaining of every firm staff-hold is not in vain, however slight the advance on the tide. The secret of meeting weaknesses seems to be that of meeting the days—one at a time. So clusters of gained islets shall stretch out before us, and on their firm sands we may step forward with resolute hearts.

An Apology

THE DIALOGUE AT THE CLUB



“ Leave
Their honorable world to them—for God
We’re good enough, tho’ the world casts us out.”

An Apology

THE DIALOGUE AT THE CLUB

It is the hour after dinner : the Judge, the Doctor and the Author, beaming upon one another under the gentle autocracy of wine, have sought the healing of tobacco.

The Judge—I finished the reading of your sermons last night, Gargoyle, and some words of Arthur Helps came into my mind. You may remember in one of his essays he says : “Indeed, the manufacture of sins is so easy a manufacture, that I am convinced men would readily be persuaded that it was wicked to use the left leg as much as the right ; whole congregations would only permit themselves to hop ; and what is more to our present point, would consider that, when they walked in the ordinary fashion, they were committing a deadly sin.”

The Author—But you may also recall what he says in the same book, in vindication of moral writings, that “at least they have produced some sweet and innocent sleep ?”

The Judge—No ; I had forgotten that, or I should have quoted it first.

The Doctor—All moralists mean well.

The Author—Thank you, doctor. I see you desire to make some amends for the words bestowed on your profession. But remember, please, I am not a moralist.

The Judge and the Doctor—Oh, no ; we never doubted that.

The Author—I had been trying for some time to reform my own character, and it occurred to me that the best method might be to cast all odd reflections on the subject into memoranda. After I did this I tried to separate them. It was a poor patchwork at best, and if the Doctor hadn't suggested printing—

The Doctor—Don't try to throw the thing on me !

The Author—Never mind ; you have yourself caused suffering to the world in other ways, and I shall not drop any of the responsibility for this mess from you.

The Doctor—“ The more fool I.”

The Judge—I think your criminals are most attractive in the essays. So much crime

is heaped upon them that you create a sympathy for them. As for that virtuous Charon you ring in every now and then, he is as insistent as the oracle's chorus you tell about—in the —— wasn't it?

The Author—Yes; but one must have a foil for the bad characters; and as he had most of the virtues I tried to keep him whole and not split him up.

The Doctor—I like a touch of over-richness now and then, despite the purists. It may be vulgar, but doesn't the old Adam cry out for a taste of vulgarity? Did not the three of us, for instance, make a round of the variety theatres one evening because we were all too tired to look at Willard's *Professor's Love Story*; and, more than that, did we not appreciate the coarse wit as if we had come into the presence of some modern Falstaff? Then remember some of the lurid melodramas that find presentation on the cheap-admission stage; they are generally as carefully vulgar as it is possible to make them; but they fill a place, and a very powerful one, in maintaining the regard for virtue. Thunders

of applause greet the triumph of the hero, no matter how absurd the situation. My knowledge of your art, Gargoyle, might be put on the back of a postage stamp, but I think I recognized some of this vulgar design in Chicago when I took in the Fair, and there was positive pleasure in it. There was one building in particular—no, I am not going to have you jump at me by naming it—that I can well imagine was a creation of the architect's vanity, but for me it was in every way a happy creation. If this sort of art cannot gain any other favoring word from you, you must admit that it gives us a point of comparison.

The Author—Not if you lack discrimination. The moment you offer the public an opportunity to be hoodwinked into believing in the goodness of badness the untangling is twice as difficult as it might have been if the lesson had been all in the right key. Remember that the public are children.

The Judge—Suppose they are ! While we don't teach children by bad example usually—or, rather, we pretend we don't—we expect them to get a great deal of good out of the

comparisons they draw for themselves as soon as their instincts commence to act, and we trust to these silent lessons as much as anything else. I can't see any aptness in your rejoinder. It would demand the total cessation of all error if carried through life, and we know quite well this cannot be. Negative and positive will always exist, even if we do refine each one as the years go by. After all, the transient vagaries and fashions of mind of the times are more to blame than these poor devils of architects, who depart from what you call rightness in their craving after the tumult of applause. Mr. Bentwood, with his abnormal ideas of the divinity of art, is to my mind more or less of an ass. There is something too un-American in this way of looking at art ; it isn't rugged enough. Let Harkins splash his vulgarity all over his buildings ever so much ; it does us all good. When you think a bit on the license we give to everything in this country, and how caricature and personal criticism are diffused with the freedom of water, the little matter of a building here and there

that may be a laughing stock for your profession and for some of the public seems too trifling to give much attention to it. As for the vanity which you claim is so great a developer of vulgarity, did you ever read the notes on that subject, "In a Club Corner?" Let me send for the book ; it's in the library here.

"Vanity, as well said, does indeed wrap a man up like a cloak. It bestows its blessings freely upon the poet striving against general misappreciation ; it enables the poor loser in the great battle of life to make himself happy with some trifling success ; it softens the bitter pangs of disappointment, and gives fresh strength for new struggles ; it prevents resentment, and facilitates the intercourse of society ; it can make any man contented with his lot, and lets the poor drudge in the kitchen think without vanity of the statesman in the parlor. Who would not be tempted to frequent irritation if he could enjoy that gift for which the poet so foolishly prayed, the gift of seeing himself as others saw him, and recognize his infinitesimal importance in the eyes of his fellows? It is because of the tender illusions of vanity that a man can accept the petty sphere of his own

activity for the wider circle of the world, and shut out the annihilating image of the vast forces beyond. It is the safeguard against a depressing fatalism. Vanity has as many virtues as the vaunted Panaceas of medical quackery ; and were it not for that softening oil, the wheels of life would grate harsh music too discordant for mortal ears. Measureless boon ! Thank thee, Heaven ! ”

Now, it seems to me that you are picking some of the down from your brother's coat, Gargoyle, in arraigning his vanity and trying to show that its reward is vulgarity.

The Author—If it only makes him feel chilly, I shall be satisfied.

The Doctor—I think that one of the mistakes you make in your paper is in omitting the mention of those insidious, unsought, but ever constant incentives to vanity which the art-life creates through its patrons. A man will often feel pleasure in applause given a *risque* story, told by him with a blush of inward self-abasement. Neither the story nor the applause are healthy, but they titillate his self-consciousness and betray him

into more excursions of the same sort. This mongrel public—which you elsewhere sample out into black and white sheep, and which the architect is called upon to meet, are very likely to use their applause in the same way. Indeed, I believe you allow this, but it seems doubtful whether your margin of allowance is broad enough for it. You have told me yourself how grateful applause seemed to you, and how hard it was to check it by faithfully saying when you thought you had failed.

The Judge—Telling when you had failed ! In the name of goodness, what folly is this ? No man should admit his failure except to himself.

The Author—But suppose he doesn't even go that far ?

The Judge—The better for his own feelings. That is where the "cloak" comes in that I have just read you about from Russell, It is part of the armor of strong wills, and is an attribute of men of heroic mould.

The Author—On that point I fear that we cannot meet ; but I must remind you that Socratic wisdom taught men that the first

thought ought not to be for the body or possessions, but earnest care for the soul, "that it may attain unto the highest virtue," and "that not from possessions does virtue come, but from virtue do possessions and all other good things, both private and public, come to man."

The Doctor—Oh, for a Utopia ! There, indeed, could I join you, Gargoyle ; but you have got to do as a commonplace friend of mine always observes, "meet men on their own ground." Laying aside all the Judge's enunciations, it is to be questioned whether the minds of many men, even in such a profession as yours, are alive enough to the necessity for constant self-criticism, and whether in this matter of the sin of vanity they would recognize its presence. You know the story of the ring, which always reminded the bearer of his want of shame by changing color ? I fear that, to carry out any reform in this matter, such a constant monitor would be necessary.

The Judge—I wondered why you did not join the censure of vulgarity and eccentricity in one essay.

The Author—I admit that in many ways they cross one another, but the two errors had each a distinct place in my mind, which I have very likely been unable to exhibit. The matter can be summed in the statement that there can be eccentricity without vulgarity—that the two can spring from separate sources.

The Judge—I confess that I can't grasp the business. Now, in the instance of the "Architectural Aberration," that you cite, did not the building design owe its origin to a wish to be novel, and was the bent of the architect's mind not directed by this instinct?

The Author—Eccentricity did play a part, but it was not the pure desire to be novel for novel's sake. Behind that feeling was the offensive ego of the man trying to force judgment into talking of himself, not of his building. The simple desire to have created a design which, by its piquancy, would stimulate public appreciation of architecture, was lacking.

The Judge—I shall try to think out the difference, but I still hold the wish that you had

combined the two weaknesses,—made a sort of composite sin of them, if you will, and I believe that in that case your arraignment of vulgarity would have been stronger. When a man spends his life in hearing arguments, pro and con, as to the virtues and vices of his fellow-men, as I do, he becomes slow to accept evidence, unless of the most positive character. The court of morals, too, is such an elusive one. Judgment must be constantly suspended to reconsider some fresh light gained by a new experience. Suppose that a public vote were to be taken on the question of chasteness or vulgarity in the concept of some building, assuming, as I think you say, that public opinion will finally find the level of truth. Would it not, after all, result in a tie, as in the story of the Oriental artist I have somewhere read? Wishing to obtain popular judgment on his work he placed a picture against a column in the market-place, with the request to the populace that each one mark with chalk the point of failure which he, as an individual, saw in the

work. The result was that the picture was completely hidden by the chalk marks. Again the artist placed the painting on view, and this time asked for judgment of its good points. The result was the same in the demonstration: the face of the panel was hidden by the marks. Your position, as artists, is without any court of final appeal. Some men, and not weak ones, by any means, think Milan Cathedral a dream of poetical beauty, and others have characterized it as tawdry in the extreme. I have looked over the *Architectural Record*, at times, and cannot help wondering whether some of their printed "aberrations" are not dictated by a feeling of compulsion to make something out bad in order to carry on the series of papers. Wasn't it that man Moser, in the South, who made a design for a building many years ago in which the American spirit was to be expressed in sculptural form all over the structure, one vast weave of the mechanical, industrial and scientific push of the country? How Whitman must have enjoyed it, if he ever saw it!

It was full of the barbaric instinct to "celebrate one's self."

The Doctor—Yes, I remember. Gargoyle showed it to me at the time it was published. It was really a painstaking essay in a good direction, I thought. But remembering that it is likely the author never intended it to be used, that it was merely a study to develop an argument, I can see how such a building would offend the best canons of art if erected.

The Judge—Canons of art be damned! Lots of them are knocked over every day like ten pins, and roll around in the dust. If Moser had erected that building somewhere there would have been a vast howl over it; part of our critical world would have treated it with contempt, part with caution. But it would have become as great a curiosity as the tower of Pisa, and it would have been a mark of the virility of the age. I think you fellows, with your drawing-boards and your Vignola, fancy that there all movement stops, and that the dance of time must forever be played to the measures you find in the

past. "Of no use are the men who study to do exactly as was done before, who can never understand that to-day is a new day. There never was such a combination as this of ours, and the rules to meet it are not set down in any history," is what Emerson said nearly a score of years ago, in Old South Church. You must either take a seat with the mute apes, Gargoyle, or throw yourself in with this breezy spirit.

The Author—Your Indiana blood is running away with you, Judge. There is no suggestion in any line I have written to bear you out in accusations of fogyism. With you, I say, let us have the expression of every modern ideal to the brimful, but is that necessarily vulgar?

The Doctor—You have created an opening for a thought that was running in my mind just then. Isn't the modern ideal vulgar in art sense, but natural and pure as a piece of personal expression, and can you ever cement the two into any whole creation? Will we not have to wait for the skimming of this seething, bubbling life, before we can get the pure liquor?

The Author—But some fellows are always putting in fresh cause for scum, and if they are allowed to do this, can we ever get it clear?

The Judge—No ; but you can leave it alone, and remember that if you can't see the more refined liquid, which you yearn for, it is there, just the same, under the "skin of things."

The Doctor—I have been thinking a good deal about Ralston and his client, Godkin. The question of the limit of personal freedom in managing another man's affairs is always coming up in every profession, and in my own work it is often a very serious dilemma. One has to judge for one's-self exactly how far it is wise to go, because the moment you introduce the subject to your patient or your client it becomes an open question and debatable, whereas the second party ought by rights to have no cognizance of it. It always disgusts me to have to teach a workman how I want a thing done when he announces himself a master of his occupation, and I take it that most people feel the same way. If a man comes to me with a serious physical complication he

ordinarily tells me all he knows about it and then leaves me alone to do as my best knowledge, he presumes, has taught me. I do not feel under obligation to him to explain that sometimes my treatment is experimental and that I can but feel my way towards a cure, because I can obtain no exact diagnosis of the case. And this liberty, it seems to me, ought to go with every man's work when the integral nature of it cannot be comprehended by the employer. The license is often necessary in cases where the reasons for and against the procedure might be perfectly clear to the employer, but where time, distance or some imperative function makes the decision, by necessity, one of the moment.

The Judge—So far as I am concerned, I would never employ an architect again if he did not do exactly as Ralston did with his cabinet-maker. In anything with which my name or money are connected I want a truer justice than that of the spy system. You can easily build up a mountain wall of distrust against every man if you never give him the benefit of your confidence

except through visual assurance of his virtue. And when a man comes to me and explains the newly-discovered insuperable obstacles in the way of carrying out one of my pet projects, pointing out how he can come nearest to my ideas, I have a feeling of genuine regard for him, even though he has signed a contract to do something which, in the first place, he might have discovered was impossible. How often the architect must be exposed to this very difficulty ! If he is a man whose impetuous thought is always wishing for improvement, he cannot prevent his desires from sometimes out-running the limits of the possible. And when he does this, and is hedged in between the criticism of his client and the impossibility of building resources, you cannot deny that his manly part is to come as near his ideal as possible and there rest his case, without running, like a child with an untractable toy, to tell the client of his bit of misjudgment. If all men were so constantly poisoning their actions before committal, where would my occupation be ?

The Doctor—"On the path of actions, a great heart is the chief recommendation," says some one, and the world-idea too often leaves the heart out. You frequently hear that there is "no sentiment in business," and, if only in secret, must frequently deplore the fact. I can never reconcile myself to this spirit of mechanical morality, and however often I may have my leg pulled in trying to exercise charity, I still think it the happiest path of conduct. There are a great many unknown expressions of return cordiality, and I would not be surprised to discover that men who keep a balance of good-will to their credit have payment rendered to them which holds the score pretty even. There is nothing to prove that all those applicants for Ralston's favors in the building of Godkin's house were working in concert, or that any one individual had the slightest knowledge of the requests made by the others. Each man may have striven to the end in the most honest spirit, and just then discovered some of the little items that were beyond his ability to complete.

After any protracted series of common labors to accomplish an end there will come the less strict hours of clearing-up time, and then discipline and rule are generally slackened.

The Judge—It seems to me that the margin of tolerance is narrow enough without putting any more limits to it. To handcuff every man to stiff-backed duty takes all the grace out of his life. You cut his tether to such short measure that he never has a chance for manly failure—and mistakes and failures are always our best school-masters. The very weighers and measurers and boards of analysis teach us more by their short-comings than by what they actually do. Every failure of theirs in strictness gives us some ideas towards betterment, and I have noticed that when you fall short of getting what you want of some special fashion, the public mart takes up your unsatisfied desire and is ready to meet the demand when made by some other fellow who is a later caller for the same goods. Even though you are disappointed, you run the chance of getting

what you want another time, when some one may have started the demand before you did. These cigars we are smoking might be very rank if the steward hadn't been incited by some of the former loafers in the club to get the best. Don't you suppose that that cabinet-maker found out where he could get the better maple before another architect called for it, and wasn't Godkin, in this, an uninvited benefactor? Ralston knew how slight in importance was the call for the few planks that would have made the grain of the wood all of one family, and feeling that Cheston had had a fright over the matter, he counted the lesson as not thrown away on any future work which the cabinet-maker might do.

The Doctor—I don't believe that the personal work or business dealings of these "strict-arians" will bear investigation, either. All the men of that kidney that I have known were unusually loose in their own affairs.

The Judge—Yes, they always want the tight boot on the other fellow's leg. They are always trying to push every pawn back

to its own proper square, and they take all of the game feeling out of the play. Elasticity is an unknown quality to them when they come in contact with other people's affairs ; it is all take and no give. You may censure the license of the present times as much as you like ; it's only the voice of humanity. Now and then it does outrun bounds and create Vigilants ; but in the "minor morals" the affairs are pretty well self-regulated.

The Doctor—And thinking only of the life of the professions, isn't a man free to some latitude? The artist, musician, author, doctor, lawyer—are they not so dreadfully overcrowded in their lives as to leave a door open for the condonement of their "sins"? Would any tradesmen work so cheerfully, against so many odds and with such irregular and protracted hours of labor? Every time I read of a labor strike I wonder whether it isn't time for us to perpetrate a similar policy. Speak up, Gargoyle.

The Author—Well, you know we have more command over our time, can order it—

The Doctor—As I did last evening, I suppose ! For one night I had resolved to be “off duty” and take my wife to the play. We were both dressed to go ; the bell tinkled—and Mrs. Hastenwell demanded me to usher her baby into the world. To-night—by the way, it’s near my office hour—I may sit down to a game of whist about ten-thirty, and the odds are that the first hand will be broken up by somebody’s spasmodic messenger.

The Author—But then—

The Judge—There are no buts about it, Gargoyle. The whole three of us are slaves, and no one will take any trouble to lessen the tightness of our fetters. We *have* to do it ourselves. The man who keeps himself upon the torture-rack of incessant duty is simply a suicide, and I declare that unlawful. It is the effort to do more than we are able, to push the fagged physical being to a pitch of desperation, that results in indifference. The naturally lazy men are the only ones who keep the entire human family from a common lunatic asylum, and our own times give pretty safe evidence

that the men who try to relieve themselves from pressure by delegating their work, accomplish the best results.

The Doctor—I am myself convinced that, outside of the insane rush for money, the untempered ambition of men to be always prompt, faithful and up to the mark in their work has caused the greater number of physical break-downs. We have not learned as yet to take into account the breadth of field which all modern work is made to cover. A house lighted by candles and heated by open fires was a simple affair ; but let one look at the modern luxury of lighting and heating, with the intricacies involved, and remember that this is but one of the many departments that go to make up a complete building as we expect it to-day. To be a conscientious caretaker and planner of all the arrangements that enter into his work must be a plagued hard task for an architect, and impossible to fulfill with the strictly personal attention that it received in earlier days. If I did not have the reports and scrutiny of nurses my list of

patients would need to be very much abbreviated. There is nothing so calming to a man's nerves, in the conduct of his work, as to have an efficient helper, upon whose shoulders the routine cares may rest, while his own thoughts have their liberty to study the more vital questions. A vast lot of nonsense about this personal element, or rather personal labor, has been given credence by writers intent on developing the stories of a romantic, Hercules-like power in the artists of past ages. More matter-of-fact historians tell us a different story and show that capable assistants have never been despised or thought unwarranted. Then again, the ambition to be so prominent in one's work as to forego the presence of efficient servants leads a man into a dreadful condition of mind in his later life. When his natural power to grasp the multitude of details has waned, he is prone to make himself a nuisance to those around him by an emphatic display of misjudgment. Assistants are led to dread, not so much the possibility of personal errors, as the

mistakes they may be forced to father through the obstinacy of the employer. Nor does this end the catalogue of troubles: for fresh ideas and those improvements that have been qualified by experience are rejected by the mind so long accustomed to self-dependence.

The Judge--As to a business man of the present day expecting to constantly receive the personal services of the man he employs, it is all nonsense. That is a bit of sixty years ago and more. I believe I was *then* very emphatic in my call for the personal attention of my nurse, but as a boy I can remember how the old-style business used to run. Merchants very frequently stood behind their own counters, and maiden ladies were sure of the personal attention of the head of the establishment. When my father walked into his grocer's, Mr. Smithard was ever ready to display to him in person the choice of cheeses, and I suppose that it would have been a breach of business etiquette if he hadn't. To-day, the store I deal with has no attraction but its wares; the proprie-

tor—whether there be one or a half-dozen I am sure I do not know—is unknown to me as an individual. The clerk who waits on me represents the store to me, and I quarrel not over the fact that the merchant himself, with beaming smile or hurrying tread fails to greet my entrance. Somewhere in the place, hidden behind what secure screen of glass and wood I care not, there exists, I believe, a PRESENCE, and I charm myself with the trust that this unseen power is ever at work securing stores of victuals to meet my demands. How it is done, or with what measure of personal devotion or attention, does not disturb me, and neither one way nor the other would it add flavor to my sauce. I steal this grocer illustration from your text, Gargoyle, because I think you are wrong in making any point of difference between grocer and customer and architect and client. Very few people who come to you to have a building designed have clear ideas of exactly what it is that you do for them. If you were to show them a cylinder mysteriously rolling off the plans of the house

they may want, and if you but convince them of the rare quality of the said cylinder, they would be as well pleased with your work as though it were finished with all the care you usually spend upon it. Of course, after they have had one or two experiences with building they get an inkling—appropriate word—of the extent of your services, if not of their value, and from that time on they may learn to hang on your individual wisdom with zest.

The Author—They do learn. I remember one client of mine who gave me three railroad trips and a half-dozen letters to write in the endeavor to secure a calsomine color which I had suggested for a room in his house. His affectionate dependence on the reliable character of my judgment became burdensome the more evidence I gave of a desire to see him suited, and yet when the calsominer, becoming weary of waiting, rashly applied one of the samples we had under consideration, the client, his wife, his daughters and his maid servants, were all so well pleased with the result as

to kindly forget that I had ever stirred a finger in the cause.

The Doctor—A case of indifference in the party of the first part, eh! Don't you think that much of the elaborate care and preparation described in public print as a part of the genesis of works of art owes its real origin to just such an unconsequential starting point? It is very easy to build a theory and a roof of reasons over a series of past actions, and the variety of results that can be produced with the same material is fairly astonishing, but it is merely romancing in an infantile way. Instead of the painstaking care with which we endow the artist in his work of designing yonder doorway, may it not have been—say a colic?—that brought about its slim proportions? For it is to the accidents of time and season, the chance of the mental or physical health, that we can usually ascribe the shading in men's work. Unknown, unfelt, unrecognized, the power in the back-ground of each life gives a vigorous touch to the helm and changes all the plots and plans that before seemed

so clearly right. You are gilding your ship with purest gold when the bonds of pleasant slumber wrap you at night, yet in the morning, grey, unsettled as to rain or shine, the bluest blue is good enough. Temperament rules likes a despot and bids us sup with whom it will ; it shapes the course of your little ship with as much distinctness as though a skein of crimson silk were unwound before it, nor is its invitation less brilliant in coloring. But a day passes, and it is only the tiresome track in which every other bark is sailing.

The Judge—Looking at your work as an outsider, Gargoyle, I should imagine that it was best conceived when the interest was sustained and unbroken.

The Author—Yes, if a man could so regulate his work that it would come to him as he needed it or as his time was unfilled, the conditions would be much happier and consequently the results. But as things go, the quantity of work in an architect's office is as uncertain as the equinoctial storm, and the wisdom of those animals who provide for a possible shortage of food

in a future season by gathering ample supplies in the present one, must perforce be imitated.

The Judge—Consequently there must come periods when all energy is put into a grand rush to cover the most ground in the shortest time, and so some one gets left. Why, it is common as salt to all life and scarcely worthy of so much fuss or fizzle. But I had started on a different thought—an excuse for the irregularity in the character of an architect's work, founded on the necessary shifting and changing from one scheme to another, forced upon him by the demands of his practice. In such necessary movements the relative importance of the different ideas must be sacrificed, and this breach of consecutiveness seems to bear the print of indifference ; whereas, in reality, it is but the unavoidable demand put upon the worker by the necessity to make a living as well as adorn his profession. To gain the food that supports life, the surroundings that give it quality and tone, and to do this honestly by one's own efforts is the first

call. While men have died in attempts to accomplish this, and yet violate no canon of duty, it has simply shifted the ground for criticism and not done away with it. Chicanery and poor work are always reprehensible, but self-sustainment is the first question, nor does it waste time with the quibbles of morality. Life once breathed into a body implies the right to a continuous existence, and no set of rules has license to set a limit to that while the natural conditions of self-support are denied.

The Doctor—I am glad to hear you uphold the life of the body, Judge, for it seems to be so much forgotten in the realm of the moralist. Starved virtue does not please me; I would rather have roast beef with a sauce of peccadillos. If, after vainly trying to frame his life in the circle of consistent action, a man is finally forced to adopt less strict measures of conduct in order to hold health and strength of mind and body, it ought not to be laid at his door as a sin. By holding on to his life raft and keeping possession of his best powers, the

after work which he does may give the greatest justification for his conduct. To deprecate the productive forces by weakening the power that energizes them, and that simply to support a so-called ethical standard, cannot be defended on any grounds except those of the most mistaken morality. Emasculated virtue is pretty poor stuff ; witness the pictures of it which Holmes gave in *The Guardian Angel*—in fact, I am reminded that all the good Doctor's books gave an emphatic touch to this plea for the life of the body.

The Judge—Yes, the manhood of old Byles Gridley in that book is breezy and refreshing to me. The personality of such a character is fitted to make one more satisfied and enthusiastic over life, and what a code of ethics he might suggest for your profession, Gargoyle ! It would rake things fore and aft ! With all the scholar beneath his mould he did not dilute his life with its affectations, nor hold that the artist was a different being from the ordinary, everyday man. What genuine pleasure it gives, by the way, to recognize in so many artists

this spirit of kinship with the broad world. Genius that can row in the same boat with we ordinary fellows and not be constantly showing its badge of privilege, or raking our humble spirits by show of quality, is good for us and makes us respect it the more. I once had an architect, who seemed to be more or less of a cockney, give evidence in a trial before me, and I noticed that the jury were but little impressed by his testimony, and some of them, indeed, dozed in quiet disregard. But presently we had another witness of the same profession, full to the brim of all-around manhood. Every soul on the jury woke up, and it isn't necessary to add that the case went with his side. The quality of his evidence was, perhaps, no better than the other man's, but the quality of the man led the way to victory.

The Doctor—The quality of witnesses to the truth is a strong power. As a lad in knee-breeches, I had instilled into me the strongest reverence for the pulpit and the men who spoke from it. A "preacher" was held in high esteem as the result of

these teachings, and always occupied a special place for goodness ; in point of fact, they were to me real high priests, on whose vesture there was no stain. It gave me a great deal of pain when I finally discovered that they were made of ordinary clay and well mixed with rough pebbles like the rest of us, but I think that from that discovery came the clearest view of life I ever gained or am ever likely to. The fact of the weakness of all men, no matter how noble or distinctly honorable their calling, did not plunge me into despair, but gave a healthy growth of charitable allowance. So I can believe that your profession is full of sinners, Gargoyle, and yet not throw it aside as unworthy of my support. I feel that these sins, which you have set over against the account of the architect, are an epidemic with us all, and that they are to be very seldom found as cultivated vices. Indeed, my own studies are tending towards a disbelief in sin as commonly regarded, and I am simply enlarging my catalogue of diseases. This discussion is outrun-

ning bounds, however, and we must quit it.

The Judge—And yet Gargoyle, before we go, haven't you some thoughts lurking in your mind, the tenor of which would run towards a defense of the architect in his abandoned, sinning existence? Not "for publication" if you like, but just amongst the three of us.

The Doctor—Yes, speak out, old man; the doors are closed and we are in secret session.

The Author—Can you find a creature harder pressed by criticism than the critic himself, or a moralist whose side lights on character and life do not demand the reverse of the picture? Still more desperate the position of one who, holding no moral cudgels or critic's lance, has trapped himself into uttering words of judgment! No matter how deeply one is conscious of the stain of guilt in his own being, or in the being of those around him, he must invent excuses and seek to find some justification, else the dagger or the hemlock suggest themselves as a highly satisfactory solution. The most abandoned wretches, lurking in the shad-

ows of public censure, have this satisfaction, and the extent of the completeness of evasion in their matured apologies they can regulate to suit themselves. So that, while there is no doubt that vulgarity as an annex of vanity is an evil, and a present one in the life of the architect, yet much might be said to show how little it is due to, or blamable on, the man himself. When Harkins commenced life as the son of a small dry-goods trader in an inland town, his early "love for drawing," as the biographies say, was made the fetich of his family, and by degrees the young man imbibed the feeling that he was not quite of the same birth as his own people, and that he was more or less of a miracle. The boy did not seek to be vain ; he had it thrust upon him, and a livelier or more attentive attendant devil than this one would it be hard to find. Perhaps it was not until well into manhood that any suspicions of his own possible deflections were made clear to him, and even then that clearness must have been of a veiled sort. At any rate, after the world had knocked him around

for awhile, and before he burst from his obscure shell into full-flowered prominence, he one time recounted to me his first day's exploits in an architect's office, how he had been set to making details in the first twenty-four hours "without any previous training." One is inclined to wonder at the character of the "details" or the sudden stature of the young phenonomen ; and yet a picture of the youth, surrounded by the ignorant admiration of his family and encouraged into complacent regard for his own work, has always been the first picture in my mental album of the life of Harkins. Brought up upon such food, the growing soul could well ignore criticism and fail to realize its imperfections, so thoroughly were they steeled over by the unwise applause of his early audience. And then somehow, as the man drifted along, his clients and crowd of supporters sprang from the same stratum as himself, and their regard for his work was always as crude and unwise as was the early idolatry. Keep the germ of a man in such an atmosphere and then preservingly hold his later development

under the same spell ; give him, to start with, but a fragment of inherited character of any well-building, and what chance do you offer the later life? Perhaps the burden of vain show, developed into vulgarity, which we have recognized in architectural work, owes much of its origin to the poison of self-assurance created by so many men being "self-made" in their art. The education of an architect on any broad or liberal grounds, or with any attempt at completeness, is but a modern growth, and those who have had to create their own school and serve as their own schoolmasters must of necessity be strongly self-reliant. And while self-reliance is a virtue, yet in art it can often serve anything but virtuous ends, for the artist must at all times feel himself to be under the absolute control of his art—must know himself as but an instrument through whose aid the finer harmonies of beauty are expressed. It is because study and mastery of the technique of his art are wanting that his designs are marred by the vulgar spirit seeking to make up

the deficiency, the display instinct filling the gaps. In the same fashion, and sometimes from the same short-comings, eccentricity thrusts forward its suggestive saving quality, the element of novelty, whether allied to vanity or distinct from it, making fight to overcome those defective points of education in the artist. It is not always because the architect desires to be absolutely quaint and unique that he seeks eccentric forms of expression, but because the real quality of his ability is lacking in completeness, and he must needs put forward some expression of his powers to hold place with the creations of better trained men. He may be very conscious of his lack of training, he may scorn himself for the doing of many things that seem to him as but show cards, and he may at all times be trying to do better ; but so long as he must meet the world in fight for bread he can but take the best weapon he owns. ♣ The indifference which a man will display in his work may often have provocation of a kind which he, or some member of his

own profession, can alone understand. Frequently it is a case of "nerves"—for men have nerves as well as women, and when they ignore the facts it is often strongly insisted upon by the offended forces. I have myself seen a man of the finest calibre, an artist from crown to finger tip, plunged into the most reckless disregard for his work, and, as his moods alternated, producing results one day at the top of his ability and the next far below its lowest level. Why? Because he had drawn so heavily on his health of body, had sought to do so much in such limited time—full of confidence in himself—that the whole of his human machinery ran wild, and was as far beyond control as a runaway engine on a down-grade. Reticent as to his own feelings, the witnesses of his performances might well accuse him of indifference, yet the real truth read that the integrity of his work was but under the cloud of an illness of which he himself scarcely conceived. "I don't know what is the matter with me ; I never felt so before," he wrote me from a seaside resort to which he had been

finally driven by his physician. A few weeks of maintained indifference to everything quickly showed the lack in his being and sent him back to his work a new man. To attempt to measure the devotion of an architect to his work by merely external signs is but shallow judgment. He may be fettered by more than one cause; not alone exhausted nerves, but private embarrassments of many kinds may affect him. In intellectual work freedom of mind from the nagging of small cares is always essential to gaining the finer results, unless we grant a man to be one of those strong fellows whose brain might be said to be muscular. Life is so full of concealed cares that one must indeed know a fellow to the inmost before risking an impeachment of his actions. ♣ And there is another factor to indifference. There are clients whose signs of appreciation of careful work are always restrained, sometimes never shown. It is like working under a cold shower after the stimulation of the first tingling has departed. One quickly grows surfeited with such treatment; enthu-

siasm is all benumbed and stiffened until even the exhilaration which visible results give to the worker by their pure presence is exhausted. It is requiring superhuman elements to expect an architect to go forward thus hampered and chilled. He cannot do it, except in a half-hearted fashion and with half-hearted results. Appreciation must go hand in hand with the work, must be given expression not entirely when the work is finished, but as it proceeds. Did you ever hear an actor express his feelings about a "cold" house?

The Judge—Yes; and mighty strong expressions they were! In themselves they would have supplied warmth for all the dramatic companies of the season!

The Author—Well, if this encouragement is lacking in an architect's work, of course he must feel it, and no blame can attach to him when he grows cold over his labor. Then, if the client is not reticent in his approving words, the builder may want enthusiasm in the execution of the work. No whip of authority can drive him into hearty interest if he doesn't want to feel it,

and every attempt to secure the spirit of co-operation is but wasted effort. Between the two, the client and the builder, or with them both hanging on his hands like icicles, is it to be wondered at when the architect himself loses fire? I can't say much about the insincerity of architects among themselves; it's a warm subject, and we must all be going home in a few minutes. But the insincerity of the architect in his relations with his client has a few points of appeal. The artist is not always the hardened offender, nor can the sum of moral shortcomings be unloaded upon him. Strict justice must make the client responsible for some points of evil in the dealings between the two, although the court of public opinion generally votes him a chance to crawl out, and appears to be more willing to listen and more lenient in blame than when the architect is under fire. The client very rarely tells the truth to his architect. He makes him believe he's poor when he is moderately well off; he checks his enthusiasm in studying out the best results by constant chills

as to cost ; he doubts many suggestions made for his benefit and hobbos with the builder over disputed points, in total disregard of his professional advisor ; he treats him as a child filled with whims and allows him his will as an indulgent parent favors his child with a toy. When it comes to "practical " questions he almost always assumes that the architect is on an unknown sea, and chides him for being full of theory. He hampers him by quarrels with the builder, by procrastination in decisions, by unexpected changes, by taking the place of the architect in authority, by calling his friends, his clerks, his family to sit in judgment—with what phase of bedevilment does he not treat his architect ? Again, he is almost always critical, rarely frank on any point, nervous over everything he cannot understand, quarrelsome over delays he has himself caused, impatient with good work because it is slow in execution. At the beginning he disputes as to the honest wage of the architect, and at the end he sometimes fails to

pay him. In short he hinders, fights, weeps, doubts—

(*The clock chimes eight.*)

The Doctor—Hold on, Gargoyle, save the balance for another time. I must go.

The Judge—As far as I can make out, necessity is not only the mother of invention, but the parent of sin?

The Author—Necessity! It is an architect's curse.

The Doctor—Good night!

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